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The LYRICAL DRAMAS of ÆSCHYLUS

Translated into ENGLISH VERSE

BY JOHN STUART BLACKIE

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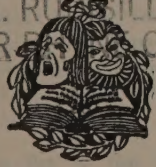

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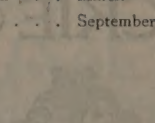

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EDITOR'S NOTE

PROFESSOR JOHN STUART BLACKIE [1809–1895], in his day fondly called "Scotland's greatest Greek scholar," began his translation of Æschylus when he was still comparatively a young man, in 1837–8, and he did not complete it, working intermittently, until 1846. Even then, there was a process of revision and correction to be gone through, which carried on the work by a further term of three or four years.

The translation had occupied twelve years, says Miss Stoddart, in her biography (1895), but only the first three and the last three of those years were specially devoted to the work. Carlyle interested himself in finding a London publisher for the translation, and he characteristically mingled his praise of it with blame. He spoke of it indeed as "spirited and lively to a high degree," and added, "the grimmer my protest against your having gone into song at all with the business." It was Professor Aytoun who suggested the rhymed choruses. Leigh Hunt wrote to Blackie, approving where Carlyle had demurred. He said: "Your version is right masculine and Æschylean, strong, musical, conscious of the atmosphere of mystery and terror which it breathes in;" and he especially admired the poetic interpretation given "to the lyrical nature of these fine Cassandra-voiced ringing old dramas."

The following is a list of the chief English translators of Æschylus:—

The Tragedies translated into English Verse; R. Potter, 1777, 1779.

The Seven Tragedies literally translated into English Prose, from the Text of Blomfield and Schütz, 1822, 1827.

Literal translation by T. A. Buckley, 1849.

The Lyrical Dramas . . . into English Verse; J. S. Blackie, 1850: into English Prose, F. A. Paley, 1864, 1891; E. H. Plumptre, 1868, 1873; Anna Swanwick, 1873; from a revised Text, W. Headlam, 1900, etc.

The Seven Plays in English Verse; L. Campbell, 1890.

The Agamemnon was translated by Dean Milman, 1865; and "transcribed" by Robert Browning, 1877. A. W. Verrall's edition of the text, with commentary and translation, appeared in 1889.

The most important of the earlier editions of the text was that by Stanley; of the more recent, that by Schütz, Wellauer, and Hermann.

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PREFACE

THE poet who publishes an original work, or the painter who exhibits the product of his own brush, does well, in the general case, to spare himself the trouble of any sort of introductory exposition or explanation; for the public are apt to look upon all such preambles as a sort of forestalling of their own critical rights: besides that a good work of art contains within itself all that is necessary to unfold its own story to an intelligent spectator. A translator, however, is differently situated. In interposing himself between the original author and the public, he occupies the position of an optical artist, who, when he presents to the infirm human eye the instrument that is to enable it to scan the path of the stars, is bound, not merely to guarantee the beauty, but to explain to the intelligent spectator the principle, and to make intelligible the reality of the spectacle. Or, as all similes limp, we may say that a translator stands to the public in the position of the old Colchian sorceress, who having cut a live body in pieces, and submitted it to a new fermentation in a magic pot, engaged to produce it again re-invigorated in all its completeness. The spectators of such a process have a right to know, not only that something—it may be a very beautiful and a very attractive thing—has come out of the cauldron, but also that the identical thing put in has come out without transmutation or transformation. And if there has been transmutation or transformation to any extent, they are entitled to know how far.

Now, with regard to poetical translation, I honestly confess that I consider the reproduction, according to the German idea of a FACSIMILE, in all respects corresponding to the original, an impossible problem. In the alembic of the translator's mind it is not merely that the original elements of the organic whole, being disintegrated, are to be restored, but the elements out of which the restoration is to be made, are altogether different; as if a man should be required to make a counterpart to a silk vesture with cotton twist, or to copy a glowing Venus of Titian in chalk. The reproduction, in such a case, can never be perfect; the copy may be something like—very like—the original, but it is not the same; it may be better in some points, and in some points worse. Just so in language. It is impossible sometimes to translate from one language into another.

Greek, for instance, is a language so redundant with rich efflorescence, so tumid with luxuriant growth and overgrowth of all kinds, that our temperate language, unless it allow itself to run into sheer madness, must often refuse to follow it. Like a practised posture-maker or expert ballet-dancer, the old Hellenic dialect can caper gracefully through movements that, if attempted, would twist our English tongue into distortion or dislocation. Æschylus, in particular, was famous, even amongst the Greeks, for the fearless, masculine licence with which he handled the most flexible of all languages. This licence I profess to follow only where I can do so intelligibly and gracefully. The reader must not expect to find, in the guise of the English language, an image of Æschylus in every minute verbal feature, such as its gigantic outline has been sketched by Aristophanes.

Some men of literary note, in the present day, observing the great difficulties with which poetical translators have to contend, especially when using a language of inferior compass, have been of opinion that the task ought not to be attempted at all—that all poetical translations, from Greek at least into English, should be done in prose; and, in confirmation of this opinion, they point to the English translation of the Hebrew Bible as a model. But if, as Southey says, "a translation is good precisely as it faithfully represents the matter, manner, and spirit of the original,"* it is difficult to see how this doctrine can be entertained. Poetry is distinguished from prose more by the manner than by the matter; and rhythmical regularity or verse is precisely that quality which distinguishes the manner of poetry from that of prose. In one sense, and in the best sense, Plato and Richter and Jeremy Taylor are poets; in another sense, and in the best sense, Æschylus and Dante and Shakespere are philosophers; but that which a poet as a poet has, and a philosopher as a philosopher has not, is verse; and this element the advocates of a prose translation of poetical works are content to miss out! That the argument from the English translation of the Bible is not applicable to every case, will appear plain to any one who will figure to himself Robert Burns or Horace or Beranger in a prose dress. In the Bible we seek for the simplicity of religious inculcation or devout meditation, and would consider the finest rhythmical decorations out of place. Besides, the style of the Hebrew poetry is eminently simple; and the rhythmical element of language, so far as I can learn, was never highly cultivated by the Jews, whose mission on earth was of a different kind. The Greeks, on the other hand, were eminently a poetical people; the poetry of their drama, though not without its

* Life, Vol. I. p. 192.

own simplicity, is, in respect of mere linguistic organism, of a highly decorated order; and by nothing is that decoration so marked as by a systematic attention to rhythm. I consider, therefore, that prose translations of the Greek dramatists will never satisfy the just demands of a cultivated taste, for the plain reason that they omit that element which is most characteristic of the manner of the original.

I am persuaded that the demand for prose translations of poets had arisen, in this country, more from a sort of desperate reaction against certain vicious principles of the old English school of translation, than from a serious consideration either of the nature of the thing, or of the capacity of our noble language. In Germany, I do not find that this notion has ever been entertained; plainly because the German poetical translations did not err, like our English ones, in conspiring, by every sort of fine flourishing and delicate furbishment, to obscure or to blot out what was most characteristic in their originals. The proper problem of an English translator is not *how to say a thing as the author would have said it, had he been an Englishman;* but *how, through the medium of the English language, to make the English reader feel both what he said and how he said it, being a Greek.* Now, any one who is familiar with the general run of English rhythmical translations, of which Pope's Iliad is the pattern, must be aware that they have too often been executed under the influence of the former of these principles rather than the latter. In Pope's Homer, and in Sotheby's also, I must add, we find many, perhaps all the finest passages very finely done; but so as Pope or Sotheby might have done themselves in an original poem written at the present day, while that which is most peculiarly Homeric, a certain blunt naturalness and a talkative simplicity, we do not find in these translators at all. The very things which most strike the eye of the accomplished connoisseur, and feed the meditations of the student of human nature, are omitted.

Now, I at once admit that a good prose translation—that is to say, a prose translation done by a poet or a man of poetical culture—of such an author as Homer, is preferable, for many purposes, to a poetical translation so elegantly defaced as that of Pope. A prose translation, also, of any poet, done accurately in a prosaic style by a proser, however much of a parody or a caricature in point of taste, may not be without its use, if in no other way, as a ready check on the free licence of omission or inoculation which rhythmical translators are so fond to usurp. But it is a mistake to suppose, because Pope, under the influence of Louis XIV. and Queen Anne, could not

write a good poetical translation of Homer, that therefore such a work is beyond the compass of the English language.* I believe that, if Alfred Tennyson were to give the world a translation of the Iliad in the measure of *Locksley Hall*, he would cut Pope out of the market of the million, even at this eleventh hour. We are, in the present epoch of our literary history, arrived at a very favourable moment for producing good translations. A band of highly-original and richly-furnished minds has just left the stage, leaving us the legacy of a poetical language which, under their hand, received a degree of rhythmical culture, of which it had been before considered incapable. The example of the Germans, also, now no longer confined to the knowledge of a few, stands forth to show us how excellent poetical translations may be made, free, at least, from those faults from which we have suffered. There is no reason why we should despair of producing poetical versions of the Classics which shall be at once graceful as English compositions, and characteristic as productions of the Greek or Roman mind. I, for one, have already passed this judgment on my own attempt, that if I have failed in these pages to bring out what is Greek and what is Æschylean prominently, in combination with force, grace, and clearness of English expression, it is for lack of skill in the workman, not for want of edge in the tool.

The next question that calls for answer is: it being admitted that a rhythmical translation of a Greek poem is preferable to a prose one, should we content ourselves with a blank rhythm (such as Shelley has used in Queen Mab, and Southey in Thalaba), or should we adopt also the sonorous ornament of rhyme. On this subject, when I first commenced this translation, about twelve years ago, I confess my feelings were strongly against the use of rhyme in translations from the antique; but experience and reflection have taught me considerably to modify, and, in some points of view, altogether to abandon this opinion. With regard to this matter, SOUTHEY has expressed himself thus:—"Rhyme is to passages of no inherent merit what rouge and candle-light are to ordinary faces. Merely ornamental passages, also, are aided by it, as foil sets off paste. But when there is either passion or power, the plainer and more straightforward the language can be made, the better." † This is the lowest ground on which the plea for rhyme can be put; but even thus, it will be impossible for a discriminating translator to ward off its application to the Greek tragedy. In all poetry written for music, there will

* SOUTHEY requested a Frenchman ambitious of translating his Roderick, to do so in prose, not because he preferred that method in general, but because he believed that "*poetry of the higher order is as impossible in French, as it is in Chinese!*"—Life, Vol. IV. p. 100.

† Life, Vol. III. p. 44.

occur, even from the best poets, not a few passages on which the mere reader will pronounce, in the language of Horace, that they are comparatively

"Inopes rerum nugaeque canorae."

To these, rhyme is indispensable. Without this, these "trifles" will lose that which alone rendered them tolerable to the ancient ear; they will cease to be "canorous." One must consider at what a disadvantage an ancient composer of "a goat-song" is placed, when the studiously modulated phrase which he adapted to the cheerful chirpings of the lyre, or the tumultuous blasts of the flute, is torn away from that music-watered soil which was its life, and placed dry and bloodless on the desk of a modern reader, beside the thought-pregnant periods of a Coleridge, and the curiously-elaborated stanzas of a Wordsworth. Are we to make him even more blank and disconsolate, by refusing him those tuneful closes of modern rhythmical language, which scarcely our sternest masters of the lyre can afford to disdain? It appears to me that rhyme is so essential an accomplishment of lyrical language, according to English use, that a translator is not doing justice to his author who habitually rejects it. I have accordingly adopted it more or less in every play, except the PROMETHEUS, the calm statuesque massiveness of which seemed to render the common decorations of lyric poetry dispensable. In the SEVEN AGAINST THEBES, I have, in the first two choral chaunts, rhymed only in the closes; and in the opening chorus of the AGAMEMNON, I have used irregular rhyme. In the FURIES, again, I have allowed myself to be borne along in the most free and luxuriant style of double rhyme of which I was capable, partly, I suppose, because my admiration of that piece stimulated all my energies to their highest pitch; partly, because, there being no question that the lyric metre of the tragedians exhibits the full power of their language, the translator is not doing justice to the work who does not endeavour, as far as may be, to bring out the full power of his. The fact of the matter is, the translator's art is always more or less of the nature of a compromise. If the indulgence of a luxuriant freedom is apt to trench on accuracy, the observance of a strict verbal accuracy is ill compatible with that grace and elasticity of movement without which poetry has no existence. In the present translation, I have been willing to try several styles, if not to suit the humour of different readers, (which, however, were anything but an illegitimate object), at least to satisfy myself what could be done.

I shall now say a word on the principles which I have adopted with regard to the representation of the various Greek metres by

corresponding varieties of English verse. I say *corresponding* or *analogous* emphatically; for, whatever apish tricks the Germans may have taught their pliant tongue to play, the conservative English ear, "peculiarly intolerant of metrical innovations,"* will not allow itself to be seduced—whether by the arguments of Southey, or the example of Longfellow—from the familiar harmonies of our old Saxon measures. Nor, indeed, is this stiffness of native metrical habit, a circumstance at all to be regretted. Every language has its own measures, which are natural and easy to it, as every man has his own way of walking, which he cannot forego for another, without affectation. I do not think Goethe's Reineke Fuchs a whit the better, but rather the worse, for being written in the measure of the Odyssey; and the artificial choral versification of Humboldt, Franz, Schoemann, and Müller, in their translations from Æschylus, is, to my ear, mere metrical monstrosity, which would read much better if it were broken down into plain prose.† I have, therefore, not attempted anything of this kind in my translation, except accidentally; that is to say, when the Greek measure happened to be at the same time an English measure, as in the case of the Trochaic Tetrameter, of which the reader will find examples in the conclusion of the AGAMEMNON, and in various parts of the PERSIANS. This measure, as Aristotle informs us,‡ is a remnant of the old energetic triple time to which the sportive Bacchic chorus originally danced; and, as it seems to be used by the tragedians in passages where peculiar energy or elevation is intended,§ I do not think the translator is at liberty to confound it in his version with the common dialogue. With regard to the Iambic dialogue itself, there can be no question that our heroic blank verse of ten syllables, both in point of character and compass, is the natural and adequate representative of the Greek trimeter of twelve.‖ The Anapæstic verse occasions more difficulty. The

* SOUTHEY—Preface to *A Vision of Judgment*.

† As for Klopstock's Odes, written mostly in classical metres, Zelter, the Berlin musician, said significantly that, when reading them, *he felt as if he were eating stones!* —See *Briefwechsel mit* GOETHE.

‡ Τὸ μὲν γὰρ πρῶτον τετραμετρῳ ἐχρῶντο διὰ τὸ σατυρικὴν καὶ ὀρχηστικωτέραν εἶναι τὴν ποίησιν. POET. 4.

§ As in the conclusion of the Agamemnon, when the passion of the interested parties has wrought itself up to a climax. So in the passionate dialogue between Eteocles and Polynices, in Eurip. Phœnis. 591. The use of the Trochees in these passages is thus precisely the same as that of the Anapæsts in the finale of the PROMETHEUS. In the PERSIANS, they serve to give an increased dignity to the person of Atossa, and the Shade of the royal Darius.

‖ "Take our blank verse for all in all, in all its gradations from the elaborate rhythm of Milton, down to its lowest structure in the early dramatists, and I believe that there is no measure comparable to it, either in our own or in any other language, for might and majesty, flexibility and compass."—SOUTHEY, Preface to the *Vision of Judgment*. What BULWER says to the contrary (Athens and the Athenians, vol. II. p. 43), was crudely thought, or idly spoken, and unworthy of so great a genius.

proper nature of this measure, as corresponding to our modern *march-time* in music, has been pointed out by Müller;* and in conformity with his views, I have, in my translation, accurately marked the distinction, in the AGAMEMNON, the SUPPLIANTS, and the PERSIANS, between the Anapæstic verses sung by the Chorus to march-time, when entering the Orchestra, and the regular odes or hymns sung after they were arrived at their proper destination round the Thymele. But how are we to render this verse in English? Our own Anapæstic verse, though the same when counted by the fingers, has, if I mistake not, a light, ambling, unsteady air about it, which is quite the reverse of the weighty character of the "equal rhythm," as the ancients called both it and its counterpart the Dactylic.† I have, therefore, thought myself safer in using, for this measure, the Trochaic verse of eight syllables, varied with occasional sevens and fives, generally without rhyme, in the AGAMEMNON with a few rhymes irregularly interspersed. In the Persians only I have made the experiment, tried also by Connington in the Agamemnon, of rendering the Greek by the common English Anapæsts; the delicate-treading (ἁβροβάται) sons of Susa not seeming to require the same weight and firmness of diction for their sad vaticinations, as the stout-hearted Titan for his words of haughty defiance, and the Herald of the Thunderer for his threats.

With regard to the proper choral odes—the most difficult, and, in my view, the most important part of my task—I have allowed myself a licence, which some may think too large, but which, if I were to do the work over again, I scarcely think I should contract. In very few cases have I given anything like a curious imitation of the original; and, when I have done so—as in the Trochaic Chaunt of the FURIES, Vol. I. p. 212, and in the Cretics mingled with Trochees, in the short ode of the SUPPLIANTS, Vol. II. p. 107‡—it was more to humour the whim of the moment than from any fixed principle. For, to speak truth, rhyming men will have their whim; and I do not think it politic or judicious to deprive the translator altogether of that rhythmical freedom which is the great delight of the original com-

* Eumenides, § 16.

† See Aristides and the musical writers; also Dionysius. Consider, also, what a solemnity Plutarch attributes to the ἐμβατηριος παιων of the Spartans (Lycurg. 22), which, of course, was either Dactylic or Anapæstic verse. Altogether, there can be no greater mistake than to imagine that our Dactylic and Anapæstic verse are the æsthetical equivalents of the ancient measures from which their names are borrowed. They are, in many parts of my translation, rather the equivalent of Dochmiac verse; and this, in obedience to the uniform practice of our highest poets, in passages of high passion and excitement.

‡ MITCHELL (Aristoph. Ran. v. 1083) has remarked, with justice, that Æschylus is particularly fond of this verse. I was prevented from using it so often as might have been desirable in the choric odes, from having made it the representative of the Anapæsts.

poser. But another, and the principal reason with me for not attempting a systematic imitation of the choral measures, was, that many of them failed to produce, on my ear, an intelligible musical effect, which I could set myself to reproduce; while, in other cases, though I clearly saw the *rhythmical principle* on which they were constructed (for I do not speak of the blind jargon of inherited *metrical terminology*), I saw with equal clearness *that in our English poetry written to be read, systematic imitation of ancient metres written on musical principles, and with a view to musical exhibition, is, in the majority of cases, altogether absurd and impertinent.* I confined myself, therefore, to the selection of such English metres as to my ear seemed most dramatically to represent the feeling of the original, making a marked contrast everywhere between the rhythmical movement of joy and sorrow, and always distinguishing carefully between what was piled up with a stable continuity of sublime emotion, and what was ejaculated in a hurried and broken style, where the Dochmiac verse prevails.*

So much for metres. With regard to the more strictly linguistic part of my task, I have only to say that I thought it proper to assume Wellauer's cautiously edited text as a safe general foundation, with the liberty, of course, to deviate from it whenever I saw distinct and clearly made out grounds. The other editions, old and new, which I have used are enumerated in an Appendix at the end of the second volume. There also will be found those Commentaries and Translations which I have consulted on all the difficult passages; my obligations to which are, of course, great, and are here gratefully acknowledged. I desire specially to name, as having been of most service to me, LINWOOD, PEILE, and PALEY among the English; WELLAUER, WELCKER, MÜLLER, and SCHOEMANN among the German scholars. My manner of proceeding with previous English translations was to borrow from them an occasional phrase or hint, only after I had finished and carefully revised my own. But my obligations in respect of poetical diction to my fellow-labourers in the same field are very few, and are for the most part specially acknowledged.

The introductory remarks to each play are intended to supply the English reader with that particular mythological or historical knowledge, and to inspire him with those Hellenic views and feelings,

* On the Dochmiacs, Ionic a minori, and other rhythmical details, the reader will find occasional observations in the Notes; and those who are curious in those matters will find my views on some points more fully stated in *Classical Museum*, No. III. p. 338; No. XIII. p. 319, and No. XXII. p. 432. The Dochmiac verse was, in fact, equivalent to a bar of $\frac{5}{8}$ in modern music.—See *Apel's Metrik.*

which are necessary to the enjoyment of the different dramas. The appended notes proceed on the principle, generally understood in this country, though apparently neglected in erudite Germany, that translations are made, not for the learned mainly, but for the unlearned. I have, therefore, not assumed even the most common points of mythological and antiquarian lore. Some of the notes, especially those on moral and religious points, have a higher view than mere explanation. They are intended to stir those human feelings, and suggest those trains of moral reflection without which the most profound scholarship issues only in a multitudinous cracking of empty nut-shells, and a ghastly exhibition of gilded bones. The few notes of a strictly hermeneutical character that are mingled with these, are mere jottings to preserve for my own use, and that of my fellow-students of the Greek text, the grounds of decision which have moved me in some of the more difficult passages, where I have either departed from Wellauer's text, or where something appeared to lie in the various renderings fraught with a more than common poetical significance. In the general case, however, the translation must serve as its own commentary; and, though I do not pretend to have read every thing that has been written on the disputed passages of this most difficult, and, in many places, sadly corrupt author, I hope there is evidence enough in every page of my work to show that I have conscientiously grappled with all real difficulties in any way affecting the meaning of the text, and not leapt to a conclusion merely because it was the most obvious and most convenient one. If here and there I have made a rapid dash, a headlong plunge, or a bold sweep, beyond the rules of a strict philology, it was because these were the only tactics that the desperation of the case allowed.*

In conclusion, I am glad to take this opportunity of publicly returning my thanks to two gentlemen of well-known literary taste and discernment, who took the trouble to read my sheets as they went through the press, and favour me with their valuable suggestions.

* The corrupt state of the Æschylean text is no doubt to be attributed mainly to the rhetorical taste which, in the ages of the decadence, prevailed so long at Rome, Athens, Alexandria, and Byzantium, and which naturally directed the attention of transcribers to the text of Euripides, the great master of tongue-fence and the model-poet of the schools. —See QUINCTIL. X. 1.

ON THE GENIUS AND CHARACTER OF THE GREEK TRAGEDY

"In der Beurtheilung des Hellenischen Alterthums soll der Scharfsinnige nicht aus sich herauszuspinnen suchen, was nur aus der Verbindung mannichfacher Ueberlieferungen gewonnen werden kann."—BÖCKH.

THE reader will have observed that the word TRAGEDY, which is generally associated with the works of Æschylus, does not occur either in the general title-page of this translation, or in the special superscriptions of the separate pieces; in the one place the designation "LYRICAL DRAMAS" being substituted, and in the other "LYRICO-DRAMATIC SPECTACLE." This change of the common title, by which these productions are known in the book-world, was not made from mere affectation, or the desire of singularity, but from the serious consideration that "the world is governed by names," and that the word "tragedy" cannot be used in reference to a serious lyrico-dramatic exhibition on the ancient Greek stage, without importing a host of modern associations that will render all healthy sympathy with the Æschylean drama, and all sound criticism, extremely difficult. Names, indeed, are a principal part of the hereditary machinery with which the evil Spirit of Error in the region of thought, as well as in that of action, juggles the plain understandings of men that they become the sport of every quibble, and believe a lie. By means of names the plastic soul of man contrives at first, often crudely enough, to express some part of a great truth, and make it publicly recognised; but when, in the course of natural growth and progress the thing has been altered, while the word, transmitted from age to age, and itinerant from East to West, remains; then the vocal sign performs its natural functions as a signifier of thought no longer, but is as a mask, which either tells a complete lie, or looks with the one-half of its face a meaning which the other half (seen only by the learned) is sure to contradict. I have, therefore, thought it convenient to do away with this cause of misunderstanding in the threshold: and the purpose of the few remarks that follow is to make plain to the understanding of the most unlearned the reason of the terminology which I have adopted, and guard him yet more fully against the misconceptions which are

sure to arise from suffering his chamber of thought to be preoccupied by the echoes of a false nomenclature.

If the modern spectator of a tragedy of Shakespere or Sheridan Knowles comes from the vivid embodiments of a Faucit or a Macready, to the perusal of what are called the "tragedies of Æschylus," and applies the subtle rules of representative art there exemplified, to the extant remains of the early Greek stage, though he will find some things strikingly conceived and grandly expressed, and a general tone of poetic elevation, removed alike from what is trivial, and what is morbid; yet he must certainly be strangely blinded by early classical prepossessions, if he fails to feel that, as a whole, a Greek tragedy, when set against the English composition of the same name, is exceedingly narrow in its conception, meagre in its furniture, monotonous in its character, unskilful in its execution, and not seldom feeble in its effort. No doubt a generous mind will be disposed to look with a kindly and even a reverent sympathy on the inferiority of the infant fathers of that most difficult of all the poetic arts, which has now, in this late age of the world, under the manly British training, exhibited such sturdiness of trunk, such kingliness of stature, and such magnificence of foliage; it may be also, that the novelty and the strangeness of some things in the Greek tragedy—to those at least who have not had their appetite palled by early Academic appliances—may afford a pleasant compensation for what must appear its glaring improprieties as falling under the category of a known genus of poetic art; still, to the impartial and experienced frequenter of a first-rate modern theatre, the first effect of an acquaintance with the old Greek tragedy is apt to be disappointment. He will wonder what there is in these productions so very remarkable that the select youth of Great Britain should, next to their mother's milk, be made to suck in them, and and them only, as the great intellectual nutriment of the fresh-fledged soul, till, in the regular course of things, they are fit to be fed on Church and State controversies and Parliamentary reports, and other diet not always of the lightest digestion; and he will be apt to imagine that in this, as in other cases, an over-great reverence for antiquity has made sensible men bow the knee to idols—that learned professors, like other persons, have their hobby-horses, which they are fond of over-riding—and that no sane man should believe more than the half of what is said by a professional trumpeter. All this will be very right in the circumstances, and very true so far. But the frequenter of the modern theatre must consider farther—if he wishes to be just—whether he be not violating one of

the great proprieties of nature, in rushing at once from the narrow confined gas-lighted boxes of a modern theatre into the large sweeping sun-beshone tiers of an ancient one. No man goes from a ball-room into a church without a certain decent interval, and, if possible, a few moments of becoming preparation. So it is with literary excursions. We must be acclimatized in the new country before we can feel comfortable. We must not merely deliver our criticism thus (however common such a style may be)—*I expected to find that; I find this; and I am disappointed;* but we must ask the deeper and the only valuable question — *What ought I to have expected to find, what shall I surely find of good, and beautiful, and true, if my eyes are open, and my free glance pointed in the right direction?* In short, if a man will enjoy and judge a Greek "tragedy," he must seek to know not what it is in reference to the general idea of tragedy which he brings with him from modern theatrical exhibitions, but what it was to the ancient Greeks, sitting in the open air, on their wooden bench, or on their seat hewn from the native rock, with the merry Bacchic echoes in their ears, long before Aristotle laid down those nice rules of tragic composition which only Shakespere might dare to despise.

Let us inquire, therefore, setting aside alike Shaksperian examples and Aristotelian canons, what the τραγῳδία, or "tragedy," was to the ancient Greeks. Nor have we far to seek. The name, when the modern paint is rubbed off, declares its own history; and we find that the main idea of the old word τραγῳδία—as, by the way, the *only* idea of the modern word τραγουδι*—is A SONG. Of the second part of this word, we have preserved the root in our English words *ode*, *melody*, *monody*, *thenody*, and the other half of the word means *goat;* whether that descriptive addition to the principal substantive came from the circumstance that the song was originally sung by persons habited like goats,† or from other circumstances connected with the worship of Dionysus, to whom this animal was sacred, is of no importance for our present purpose. The main fact to which we have to direct attention, is that the word *tragedy*, when analysed, bears upon its face, and in the living Greek tongue proclaims loudly to the present hour, that the essential character of this species of poetry—when the name was originally given to it—was lyrical, and

* There is a prevalent idea that the modern Greek language, or Romaic, as it is called, is a different language from the ancient Greek, pretty much in the same way that Italian is different from Latin. But this is a gross mistake. Greek was and is one unbroken living language, and ought to be taught as such.

† WHISTON, Article TRAGEDY in SMITH'S Dictionary of Antiquities, Second Edition; and DONALDSON in the GREEK THEATRE, Sixth Edition. London: 1849. P. 30.

not at all dramatic or tragic, in the modern sense of these words. A drama, in modern language, means an action represented by acting persons; and a tragedy is such a represented action, having a sad issue; but neither of these elements belonged to the original Greek tragedy, as inherited from his rude predecessors by Æschylus, nor (as we shall immediately show) do they form the prominent or characteristic part of that exhibition, as transmitted by him to his successors. With regard to the origin of the Greek "goat-song," and its condition previous to the age of Æschylus, there is but one uncontradicted voice of tradition on the subject; the curious discussions and investigations of the learned affecting only certain minute points of detail in the progress, which have no interest for the general student. That tradition is to the effect that the Greek lyrical drama, as we find it in the extant works of Æschylus, arose out of the Dithyrambic hymns sung at the sacred festivals of the ancient Hellenes in honour of their god Dionysus, or, as he is vulgarly called, Bacchus; hymns which were first extemporized under the influence of the stimulating juice of the grape,* and then sung by a regularly trained Chorus, under the direction of the famous Methymnean minstrel, Arion.† The simplest form which such hymns, under such conditions, could assume, was that of a circular dance by a band of choristers round the statue or the altar of the god in whose honour the hymn was sung. This is not a matter peculiar to Greece, but to be found at all times, and all over the world, wherever there are men who are not mere brutes. So in the description of the religious practices of the ancient Mexicans, our erudite poet SOUTHEY has the following beautiful passage, picturing a sacred choral dance round the altar of sacrifice:—

Round the choral band
The circling nobles gay, with gorgeous plumes,
And gems which sparkled to the midnight fire,
Moved in the solemn dance; each in his hand,
In measured movements, lifts the feathery shield,
And shakes a rattling ball to measured sounds;
With quicker steps, the inferior chiefs without,

* Γενομένη ἀπ ἀρχῆς αὐτοσχεδιαστικὴ ἡ τραγῳδία ἀπὸ τῶν ἐξαρχόντων τὸν διθύραμβον κατὰ μικρον ἠυξήθη.—ARISTOT. poet. 4.—Compare the words of the old Iambic poet Archilochus, given by Athenaeus (XIV. p. 628)—"*I know well how to dance the Dithyramb when the wine thunders dizzily through my brain!*" The word *Dithyramb*, according to the best etymology which has come in my way (DONALDSON & HARTUNG), means *the revel of the god.*

† Ἀρίον τὸν Μηθυμναίον πρῶτον ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν ποιήσαντα τε καὶ ὀνομάσαντα καὶ διδάξαντα τὸν διθύραμβον ἐν Κορίνθῳ.—HEROD. I. 23. Compare SUIDAS *in voce* ARION, and *Schol.* PINDAR., Olymp. XIII. 25.

> Equal in number, but in just array,
> The spreading radii of the mystic wheel
> Revolved; and outermost, the youths roll round,
> In motions rapid as their quickened blood.

Now, according to the general tradition of old Greek commentators and lexicographers, the Dithyramb or Bacchic Hymn was also called a *Circular Hymn*,* an expression which a celebrated Byzantine writer has interpreted to mean "*a hymn sung by a chorus standing in a ring round the altar.*"† It is, no doubt, true that the phrase χορὸς κύκλιος, or circular chorus, does not necessarily mean a chorus of this description; the term, as has been ingeniously observed,‡ like our own word *roundelay*, and the German *Rund-gesang*, being capable of an equally natural application to a hymn composed of parts, that run back to the point from which they started, and form, as it were, a circle of melody. But, whatever etymologists may make of the word, the fact that there were hymns sung by the ancient Greeks in chorus round the altars of their gods is not denied; and seems, indeed, so natural and obvious, that we shall assume it as the first form of the "goat-song," in which form it continued up to a period which it is impossible to define; the only certainty being that, whereas, in olden times, it was composed of fifty men, it was afterwards diminished to twelve or fifteen, and arranged in the form of a military company in regular rank and file.§ Such a chorus, therefore, was the grand central trunk out of which the Attic tragedy branched and bloomed to such fair luxuriance of verbal melody. We shall now trace, if we can, the natural steps of progress.

Let us suppose that the Leader of a Chorus, trained to sing hymns in honour of the gods, is going to make them sing publicly a hymn

* Διθύραμβος ὃς ἦν κύκλιος χορός.—Schol., Pindar, as above.

† χορὸς ἑστὼς κυκλικῶς.—Tzetzes. Proleg. to Lycophron.

‡ Hartung, on the Dithyramb.—Classical Museum, No. XVIII. p. 373. Murr's literature of ancient Greece.—Vol. III., p. 85.

§ The number fifty is mentioned in the Epigram of Simonides, beginning ἦρχεν Ἀδείμαντος, in the above-mentioned prologue of Tzetzes, and in Pollux, Lib. iv., 15, who says that this number of the Chorus was used even by Æschylus up to the time when the Eumenides was represented. The number *twelve* is commonly mentioned by other authorities as having been used by Æschylus, while Sophocles is said to have increased it to fifteen, which afterwards became the standard number. Müller (Eumenides) ingeniously supposes that the tragic poets, so long as the exhibition by tetralogies lasted, got the original number of *fifty* from the public authorities, and divided it among the different pieces of the tetralogy. Blomfield's notion (Preface to the Persae) that the Chorus to the Eumenides consisted of only three persons, though a kind word has been said in its favour lately (Mason in Smith's Dict. of Antiq. *voce* Chorus), deserves, in my opinion, not a moment's consideration, either on philological or æsthetical grounds. I may mention here further, for the sake of those to whom these matters are strange, that the Chorus holds communication with the other characters in a Greek play generally by means of its Coryphaeus or Leader, which is the reason why it is often addressed in the singular and not in the plural number.

in honour of Ζεὺς ἱκέσιος—Jove, in his benign character as the friend of the friendless, and the protector of suppliants. Instead of a vague general supplication in the abstract style to which we are accustomed in our forms of prayer, what could be more natural than for a susceptible and lively Greek to conceive the persons of the Chorus as engaged in some particular act of supplication, well known in the sacred traditions of the people, whose worship he was leading, and to put words in their mouths suitable to such a situation? This done, we have at once *drama*, according to the etymological meaning of the word; that is to say, a represented *action*. The Chorus represents certain persons, we shall say, the daughters of Danaus, fugitives from their native Libya, arrived on the stranger coast of Argolis, and in the act of presenting their supplications to their great celestial protector. Such an exhibition, if we will not permit it to be called by the substantive name of *drama*, is, at all events, a dramatized hymn; an ode so essentially dramatic in its character, that it requires but the addition of a single person besides the Chorus to form a complete action; for an action, like a colloquy, is necessarily between two parties—meditation, not action, being the natural business of a solitary man. Now, the single person whose presence is required to turn this dramatized hymn into a proper lyrical drama is already given. The Leader of the Chorus, or the person to whom the singing band belonged, and who superintended its exhibitions, is such a person. He has only, in the case supposed, to take upon himself the character of the person, the king of the Argives, to whom the supplication is made, to indicate, by word or gesture, the feelings with which he receives their address, and finally to accept or reject their suit; this makes a complete action, and a lyrical drama already exists in all essentials, exactly such as we read the skeleton of it at the present hour, in the SUPPLIANTS of Æschylus. To go a step beyond this, and add (as has been done in our play) another actor to represent the party pursuing the fugitives, is only to bring the situation already existing to a more violent issue, and not essentially to alter the character of the exhibition. Much less will the mere appendage of a guide or director to the main body of the Chorus, in the shape of a father, brother, or other accessory character, change the general effect of the spectacle. The great central mass which strikes the eye, and fills ear and heart with its harmonious appeals, remains still what it was, even before the leader of the band took a part in the lyric exhibition. The dramatized lyric, and the lyrical drama, differ from one another only according to the simile already used, as a tree with two or three branches differs from a tree with a simple stem.

The main body and stamina are the same in each. The SONG is the soul of both.

The academic student, who is familiar with these matters, is aware that what has been here constructed hypothetically, as a natural result of the circumstances, is the real historical account of the origin and progress of the Greek tragedy, as it is shortly given in a well-known passage of Diogenes Laertius. "In the oldest times," says that biographer of the philosophers, "the Chorus alone went through the dramatic exhibition (διεδραματίζεν) in tragedy; afterwards Thespis, to give rest to the Chorus, added one actor distinct from the singers; then Æschylus added a second, and Sophocles a third; which gave to tragedy its complete development."* The reason mentioned here for the addition of the first actor by Thespis, is a very probable one. The convenience or ease of the singers contributed, along with the lively wit of the Greeks, and a due regard for the entertainment of the spectators, to raise the dramatized ode, step by step, into the lyrical drama.

In the above account, two secondary circumstances connected with this transition, have not been mentioned. The *first* is, that the jocund and sometimes boisterous hymn, in honour of the wine-god, should have passed into the lyrical representation of an action generally not at all connected with the worship or history of that divinity; and, *secondly*, that this action should have changed its tone from light to grave, from jocular to sad, and become, in fact, what we, in the popular language of modern times, call *tragic*. Now, for the first of these circumstances, I know nothing that can be said in the way of historical philosophy, except that man is fond of variety, that the Greek genius was fertile, and that accident often plays strange tricks with the usages and institutions of mortal men. For the other point, there can be no doubt that the worship of the god of physical and animal joy, being violent in its character, had its ebb as well as its flow, its broad-gleaming sunshine not without the cloud, its wail as well as its rejoicing. Whether Dionysus meant the sun, or only wine, which is the produce of the solar heat, or both, it is plain that his worshippers would have to lament his departure, at least as often as they hailed his advent; and, in this natural alternation, a foundation was laid for the separation of the original Dithyrambic

* *Vit. Philos.* III. 34. It will be observed that, if a third actor appears on the stage in some parts of the Orestean trilogy, this is to be accounted for by the supposition that, in his later plays, the poet adopted the improvements which his young rival had first introduced. The number of actors here spoken of does not, of course, take into account mutes or supernumeraries, such as we find in great numbers in the Eumenides, and more or less almost in every extant piece of Æschylus.

Chorus into a wild, sportive element, represented by the Aristophanic comedy, and a deeply serious, meditative element represented by tragedy. But we must beware, in reference to Æschylus at least, of supposing that the lyrical drama, as exhibited by him, however solemn and awe-inspiring, was necessarily sad, or, as we say, tragic in its issue. Aristotle indeed, in his famous treatise, lays down the doctrine that the main object of tragic composition is to excite pity and terror, and that Euripides, "though in other respects he manages badly, is in this respect the most tragic of the tragedians, that the most of his pieces end unfortunately."* But there is not the slightest reason, in the nature of things, why a solemn dramatic representation, any more than a high-toned epical narrative, should end unfortunately. The Hindoo drama, for one, never does;† and, in the case of our poet, it is plain that the great trilogy, of which the Orestes is the middle piece, is constructed upon the principle of leading the sympathizing spectator through scenes of pity and terror, as stations in a journey, but finally to a goal of moral peace and harmonious reconciliation. That the great trilogy of the PROMETHEUS, of which only one part remains, had an equally fortunate termination, is not to be doubted. Here, therefore, we see another impertinence in that modern word *tragedy*, which, in the superscriptions of these plays, I have been so careful to eschew.

We shall now examine one or two of the Æschylean pieces by a simple arithmetical process, and see how essentially the lyrical element predominates in their construction. Taking Wellauer's edition, and turning up the SUPPLIANTS, I find that that play, consisting altogether of 1055 lines, is opened by a continuous lyric strain of 172 lines. Then we have dialogue, in part of which the Chorus uses lyric measures to the extent of 22 lines. Then follows a short choral song of only 20 lines. The next Chorus comprises 76 lines, and the next 70. After this follows another dialogue, in which the Chorus, being in great mental agitation, use, according to the uniform practice of Æschylus, lyric measures to the extent altogether of 20 verses. Then follows another regular choral hymn of 47 lines. After that a violent lyrical altercation between the Chorus and a new actor, to the amount of 74 lines, in the most impassioned lyrical rhythm. Then follow 14 lines of anapæsts; and the whole concludes with a grand lyrical finale of 65 lines: altogether 580—considerably more than the half of the piece by bare arithmetic, and equal to two-thirds of it fully, if we consider how much more time the singing, with the musical accompaniments, must have occupied than the simple

* Poetics, c. xiii. † Wilson, Vol. I. p. xxvi.

declamation. No more distinct proof could be required how essentially the account of Diogenes Laertius is right; how true it is that the choral part of the Æschylean drama is both its body and its soul, while the dialogic part, to use the technical language of Aristotle's days, was, in fact, only an ἐπεισόδιον (from which our English word *Episode*) or thing thrown in between the main choral acts of the representation, for the sake of variety to the spectators, and, as the writer says, of rest to the singers. We thus see, also, what an incorrect and indefinite idea of the Æschylean drama Aristotle had when he says—so far as we can gather his meaning—that "Æschylus first added a second actor; he also abridged the chorus, and made the dialogue the principal part of tragedy."* The last article, so far as the play of the SUPPLIANTS is concerned, is simply not true. Let us make trial of another play. The AGAMEMNON, which, for many reasons, is one of the best for testing the mature genius of the bard, contains about 1600 lines; and, without troubling the reader with details, it will be found that about the half of this number is written in lyric measures. When we consider, further, that the most splendid imaginative pictures, and the wildest bursts of passion, all the interest, the doubt, and the anxiety, the fear, the terror, the surprise, and the final issue, are, according to the practice of Æschylus, regularly thrown into lyric measures, we shall be convinced that Aristotle (if we rightly apprehend him) was altogether mistaken when he led the moderns to imagine that the father of tragedy had really given such a preponderance to the dialogic element, that the lyric part is to be looked on, in his productions, as in any way subordinate. Unless it be the PROMETHEUS, I do not know a single extant play of Æschylus in which the lyric element occupies a position which, in actual representation, would justify the dictum of the Stagyrite. And even in this play, let it be observed, how grandly the poet makes his anapæsts swell and billow with sonorous thunder in the finale; as if to make amends for the somewhat prolix epic recitals with which he had occupied the spectator, and to prove that a Greek tragedy could never be true to itself, unless it left upon the ear, in its last echoes, the permanent impression of its original character as a SONG.

Three observations strike me, that may conveniently be stated as corollaries from the above remarks. *First*, That those translators have erred who, whether from carelessness, or from ignorance, or from a desire to accommodate the ancient tragedy as much as possible to the modern, have given an undue predominance to blank

* Twining; but the meaning of the Greek is disputed.

verse in their versions, making it appear as if the spoken part of the Æschylean tragedy bore a much larger proportion, than it really does, to the sung. *Second*, Those critics have erred who, applying the principles of modern theatrical criticism to the chaunted parts of the ancient lyrical drama, have found many parts dull or wearisome, extravagant, and even ridiculous, which, there can be no doubt, with their proper musical accompaniment, were the most impressive, and the most popular parts of the representation. *Third*, We err altogether, when we judge of the excellence of an ancient Greek drama as a composition, by its effect on us when reading it. The SUPPLIANTS, for instance, is generally considered a stupid play; because it wants grand contrasts of character and striking dramatic situations, and contains so much of mere reiterated supplication. But this reiteration, though wearisome to us who read the text-book of the lost opera, was, in all probability, that on which the ravished ears of the devout ancient auditors dwelt with most voluptuous delight. In general, without re-creating some musical accompaniment, and dwelling with ear and heart on the frequent variations of the lyric burden of the piece, a man is utterly incapable of passing any sane judgment on an Æschylean drama. Such a piece may contain in abundance everything that the auditors desired and enjoyed, and yet be very stupid now to us who merely read and criticise.

The fact of the matter is, that the marshalled band of singers, however satisfactory to an ancient audience, who looked principally for musical excitement in their tragedies, and not for an interesting plot, was not at all calculated for allowing a dramatic genius to bring out those tragic situations in which the modern reader delights; but rather stood directly in the way of such an effect. The fine development of character under the influence of various delicate situations, and in collision with different persons, all acting their part in some complex knot of various-coloured life, could not be exhibited in a performance where a band of singers on whom the eye of the spectators principally rested, and who formed the great attraction for the masses,* constantly occupied the central ground, and constantly interfered with every thing that was either said or done, whether it was convenient for them to do so or not. For a perfect tragedy, as conceived scientifically by Aristotle, and executed with a grand practical instinct by Shakespere, the Chorus was, in the very nature

* "ἡ μελοποίια, μέγιστον τῶν ἡδυσμάτων."—Poetics, c. vi. The success of the modern *Italian* opera in England, proves this in a style of which Aristotle could have had no conception.

of the thing, an incumbrance and an impediment. It was only ver seldom that the persons of that body could form such an importar part of the action, and come forward with such a startling dramati effect as in the Eumenides. Too often they were obliged to han round the action as an atmosphere, or look at it as spectators spectators either impartial altogether, and then too wise for dramati sympathy, or half-partial, and then, by indecision of utterance, ofte making themselves ridiculous, as in a noted scene of the Agamemno (Vol. I. p. 79), or contemptible, as in the Antigone.* The prope position of the Chorus in a regularly constructed drama, is, like th witches in Macbeth, to form a mysterious musical background (not *fore*-ground, as in the Greek tragedy), or to circle, as in the opera o Masaniello, the principal character with a band of associates natur ally situated to assist and cheer him on to his grand enterprise. Bu the Greek Chorus, even in the time of Sophocles and Euripides, wh enlarged the spoken part, was too independent, too stationary, to central a nucleus of the representation, not to impede the movement of the acting persons who performed the principal parts. As a form of art, therefore, the Greek tragedy, so soon as it attempted t assume the scientific ground so acutely seized on by the subtle analy sis of Aristotle, was necessarily clumsy and incongruous. The lyri element, which was always the most popular element, refused to b incorporated with the acting element, and yet could not be altogethe displaced; a position of scenic affairs which has strangely perplexed not a few modern critics, looking for a dramatic plot with all the dramatic proprieties in a composition where the old Hellenic specta tor only felt a hymn to Jove; and curiously tasking their wits to find excuses for a poet like Euripides, who, with blossoming lyrics and sonorous rhetoric, might gain the prize of the "goat-song," even over the head of a Sophocles, and yet, in point of dramatic propriety, as we demand it in our modern plays, be constantly perpetrating enormi ties which a clever schoolboy at Westminster or Eton might avoid.†

* The position of the old Theban senators, who form the Chorus in this play, has called forth not a little learned gladiatorship lately; Böckh (whose opinion on all such matters is entitled to the profoundest respect) maintaining that the Chorus is the imper sonated wisdom of the play as conceived in the poet's mind, while some of his critics (*Dyer* in *Class. Mus.* Vol. II. p. 69) represent them as a pack of cowardly sneaking Thebans, whom it was the express object of the poet to make ridiculous. This latter opinion is no more tenable than it would be to say that it was the object of Æschylus to make his Chorus of old men in that noted scene of the Agamemnon ridiculous; but so much truth there certainly is in it, that from the inherent defect of structure in the Greek tragedy, consisting in the constant presence of the Chorus in the double capacity of impartial moralizers and actors after a sort, there could not but arise this awkwardness to the poet that, while he always contrived to make them speak wisely, he sometimes could not prevent them from acting weakly, and even contemptibly.

† On the dramatic imbecility of Euripides, see my article in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, No. XLVIII. His success as a dramatist is the strongest possible proof of the undramatic nature of the stage for which he wrote.

So much for the artistic form of the Æschylean drama. As for the matter, it was essentially a combination of mythologial, legendary, and devotional elements, such as naturally belonged to a people whose religion was intimately blended with every passion of the human heart, and every chance of human life, and whose gods were only a sort of glorified men, as their men sometimes were nothing less than mortal gods. The Greek lyrical dramas were part of the great public exhibitions at the great feasts of Bacchus, which took place, some in the winter season, and some in the spring of the year;* and in this respect they bear a striking resemblance both to the Hindoo dramas (for which see WILSON), to the so-called mysteries and moralities of mediæval piety, and to the sacred dramas of Metastasio, exhibited to the court at Vienna. And what sort of an aspect does ancient polytheistic piety present, what sort of an attitude does it maintain, in these compositions? An aspect surprisingly fair, considering what motley confusion it sprang from, an attitude singularly noble, seeing how nearly it was allied to mere animal enjoyment, and how prone was its degeneration into the mire of the grossest sensuality. The pictured pages of Livy, and brazen tablets of the grave Roman senate still extant, tell only too true a tale into what a fearful mire of brutishness the fervent worship of Dionysus might plunge its votaries. And yet out of this Bacchantic worship, so wild, so animal, and so sensual, arose the Greek tragedy, confessedly amongst the most high-toned moral compositions that the history of literature knows. Our modern Puritans, who look upon the door of a theatre (according to the phrase of a famous Edinburgh preacher) as the gate of hell, might take any one of these seven plays which are here presented in an English dress, and with the simple substitution of a few Bible designations for Heathen ones, find, so far as moral and religious doctrine is concerned, that, with the smallest possible exercise of the pruning-knife, they might be exhibited in a Christian Church, and be made to subserve the purposes of practical piety, as usefully as many a sermon. The following passage from the Agamemnon is not a solitary gem from a heap of rubbish, but the very soul and significance of the Æschylean drama:—

> "For Jove doth teach men wisdom, sternly wins
> To virtue by the tutoring of their sins;
> Yea! drops of torturing recollection chill
> The sleeper's heart; 'gainst man's rebellious will
> Jove works the wise remorse:
> Dread Powers, on awful seats enthroned, compel
> Our hearts with gracious force."

* See the article DIONYSIA, by Dr. SCHMITZ, in SMITH'S Dictionary of Antiq.

The only serious charge that, to my knowledge, has ever been made against the morality of the Greek drama, is that in it "an innocent person, one in the main of a virtuous character, through no crime of his own, nay not by the vices of others, but through mere FATALITY AND BLIND CHANCE, is involved in the greatest of all human miseries." This is the critical judgment of Dr. Blair (lecture xlvi.) in reference to the famous Labdacidan story of Œdipus.* Now though the personal history of Œdipus contains many incidents that expose it justly to criticism, especially when brought upon the stage in a modernized dress by modern French or other poets (which abuse the learned Doctor no doubt had principally in view); yet, as applied to the whole Labdacidan story, or to the subjects of the Greek drama generally, the allegation is either extremely shallow, or altogether false, There is no destiny or fatality of any kind in the Æschylean drama, other than that which, according to the Mosaic record, drove Adam out of Paradise; that destiny which a divine decree, seeing the end in the beginning, has prepared, and that fatality which makes a guilty man not merely the necessary architect of his own misery, but the propagator of a moral contagion, more or less, to the offspring that inherits his pollution and his curse. On this subject I need make no lengthened observations here, as I have brought it and other points of moral and religious feeling prominently forward, both in the introductory observations to the separate plays, and in various places of the notes. I shall only say that the reader who does not find a high moral purpose and a deep religious meaning in the specimens of ancient Greek worship now submitted to his inspection, has no eye for what is best in these pages, and had better throw the book down. The Germans, who look deeper into these matters than we have either time, inclination, or, in the general case, capacity to do, have written volumes on the subject.† To me it has seemed more suitable to the genius of the English reader merely to hint the existence of this rich mine of moral wealth, leaving to the quiet thinker where, amid our various political and ecclesiastical clamour, he may have found a corner, to work out the vein with devout spade and mattock for himself.

* The same doctrine, I am sorry to see, has been repeated with special reference to Æschylus, and with very little qualification, by WHISTON in the article *Tragedia* in Dr. Smith's Dict. Antiq., 2d Edit., p. 1146. SCHLEGEL is quite wrong, when he says "the Greek gods are mere *Naturmächte*"—physical or elemental powers. CONNINGTON, however, in the preface to his Agamemnon, expresses exactly my sentiments, when he protests against a "crystallization of destiny" being set up "as the presiding genius of the national dramatic literature of the Greeks."

† See the works of KLAUSEN and BLUMNER at the end of Vol. II. And our English SEWELL recognizes, in the works of Æschylus, "the voice of a self-constituted Heathen Church protesting against the vices and follies that surrounded her."—Preface to the Agamemnon, p. 15.

A few words must now be said on the DANCE, as an essential part of the lyrical element of the Greek tragedy. Our sober British, stern Protestant, and precise Presbyterian notions, make it very difficult for us to realize this peculiarity. Even the old Heathen Roman could say, "NEMO FERE SALTAT SOBRIUS, NISI FORTE INSANIT";* much more must it be hard for a modern Presbyterian Christian to recognise, in the twinkling-footed celerity of the merry dance, an exercise which a pious old Dorian could look upon as an indispensable part of an act of public worship. To read the weighty moral sentences of a solemn Æschylean Chorus, and then figure to ourselves their author as a dancing-master, is an unnatural and almost painful transition of thought to a Christian man in these times; and yet Athenæus tells us, that the author of the Prometheus really was a professor of the orchestric art, and a very cunning one too.† The fundamental truth of the case is, that the religion of the Greeks was not, like ours, a religion only of moral emotions and theological principles, but a religion of the whole man, with rather too decided a tendency, in some parts, it must be confessed, towards a disturbance of the equipoise on the side of the senses. But, whatever may be thought of Bacchic orgies and other associate rites, with regard to dancing, there is plainly nothing in the exercise, when decorously conducted, inconsistent either with dignity, or with piety; and the feelings of ancient Romans and modern Presbyterians on the subject, must be regarded as the mere products of arbitrary association. Certain it is, that all the Greek philosophers looked upon dancing as an essential element, not only in the education of a gentleman, but in the performance of public worship; nay, even among the severe Jews, we read that David, on occasion of a great religious festival, danced before the Lord; and only an idle woman called him an idle fellow for doing so. We need not be surprised, therefore, if among the merry Greeks, professing a religion fully as much of physical enjoyment as of moral culture, orchestric evolutions, along with sacred hymns, formed an essential part of the tragic exhibitions belonging to the feasts of the great god Dionysus. On the details of this matter, we are sadly wanting in satisfactory information; but that the fact was so, there can be no doubt.‡ The only point with regard to which there is room for a serious difference of opinion is, whether every performance of the

* Cicero pro Muræna, 13.

† Αισχύλος πολλὰ σχήματα ὀρχηστικὰ ἀυτος ἐξευρίσκων, ἀνεδίδου τοῖς χορευταῖς.—Lib. I. p. 22.

‡ See DYER, on the Choral Dancing of the Greeks.—*Classical Museum*, No. IX. p. 229.

Chorus in full band included dancing, or whether it was only introduced occasionally, as the ballet in our modern operas. On this point, the greatest authority in Greek Literature at present living has declared strongly in favour of the latter view; and, in doing so, he has been followed by one of the first philologers of our own country;* and as I have not been led, in the course of my studies, to make any particular examination of this subject, I am loath to contradict anything proceeding from such an authoritative quarter. One great branch of the evidence, I presume, on which this view is supported, lies in the words of the old Scholiast to the choral chaunt in the Phœnissae of Euripides, beginning with these words, Τύριον δίδμα λιποῦσ' ἔβαν. "This chaunt," says the annotator, "is what is called a στάσιμον, or *standing* chorus; for when the Chorus, after the πάροδος, remaining motionless, sings a hymn arising out of the subject of the play, this song is called a στάσιμον. A πάροδος, on the other hand, is a song sung as they are marching into the orchestra on the first entrance."† Now, no doubt, if this matter be taken with a literal exactitude, the expression, ἀκίνητος, or *without moving*, will exclude dancing; but if we merely take it generally, as opposed to the great sweeping evolutions of the Chorus, and as implying only a permanent occupation of the same ground in the centre of the orchestra, by the band, as a whole, while the individual members might change their places in the most graceful and beautiful variety of forms, we are thus saved from the harshness of giving to the orchestric element, in many plays, a subordinate position, equally at variance with the original character of the Chorus, and with the place which the dance held as a prominent part of Greek social life.‡ With regard to Æschylus, in particular, I do not see how I should be acting in consistency with the testimony of Athenæus just quoted, if I were to assign such a small proportion of the choric performances to orchestric accompaniment, as Boeckh and Donaldson have done in their editions of the play of Sophocles, which the genius of Miss Faucit has rendered so dear to the friends of the drama in this country. It would be easy to show, from internal evidence such as Boeckh finds in what he calls the Orchestric Chorus, or ἐμμέλεια of the Antigone, that certain choruses of Æschylus are more adapted for violent and extensive orchestric movements than others. But I have thought it more prudent, con-

* Böckh and Donaldson, in their editions of the Antigone. Berlin, 1843, p. 280. London, 1848. Introduction, p. xxix.

† I read εἰσόδῳ, not ἔξόδῳ, as it is in Matthiae, which is either a misprint, or a mistake in the writer, as the quotation immediately following proves.

‡ This is Muller's view in Eumenides, § 21.

sidering the general uncertainty that surrounds this matter, not to make any allusion to dancing in any one performance of the Chorus more than another; contenting myself with carefully distinguishing everywhere between the anapæstic parts where the Chorus is plainly making extensive movements, and the CHORAL HYMN with regular Strophe and Antistrophe, which is sung when they are placed in their proper position in a square band round the *Thymele* (θυμέλη), or Bacchic altar, in the centre of the orchestra.*

Having said so much with regard both to the form and substance of the lyric portion of the Æschylean drama, I have said almost all that I was anxious to say; for, in stating this matter clearly, I have brushed out of the way the principal part of that host of modern associations which is so apt to disturb our sympathetic enjoyment of the great masterpieces of Hellenic art. Anything that might be said in detail on the iambic or dialogic part of ancient tragedy would only serve to set in a yet stronger light the grand fact which has been urged, that the strength of the Greek drama lies in the singing, and not in the acting. It were easy to show by an extensive analysis, that the classical "goat-singers" had but very imperfect notions on the subject of stage dialogue; and that it was a light thing for them to deal at large in mere epic description, or rhetorical declamation, without offending the taste of a fastidious audience, or sinning grossly against the understood laws of the sort of composition which they exhibited.† Notwithstanding Aristotle's nicely-drawn distinction, the narrated, or purely epic parts of the Greek tragedy, are often the best. This is the case not seldom even with Æschylus, whose native dramatic power the voice of a master has judged to be first-rate.‡ But with him the infant state of the art, and the insufficient supply of actors,§ combined with a radical faultiness of structure, produced, in not a few instances, the same anti-dramatic results as the want of dramatic genius in Euripides. Further, to

* It may be as well here, for the sake of some readers, to remark that the orchestra, or *dancing place* (for so the word means), was that part of the ancient theatre which corresponds to the modern PIT. For a minute description of the ancient stage, the reader must consult DONALDSON's Greek Theatre, c. VII.

† One of the most striking proofs of this is the many instances that occur in the tragedians of that most undramatic of all mannerisms—*self-description*—as when a sorrowful Chorus describes the tears on its cheek, the beating on its breast, and such like. True grief never paints itself.

‡ BULWER, in Athens and the Athenians.

§ From the limited number of actors arose necessarily this evil, that the persons in a Greek dramatic fable appear not cotemporaneously, but in succession, one actor necessarily playing several parts. Now, the commonest fabricator of a novel for the circulating library knows how necessary it is to keep up a sustained interest, that the character, when once introduced, shall not be allowed to drop out of view, but be dexterously intermingled with the whole complex progress of the story, and be felt as necessary, or at least as agreeable, to the very end.

use the language of Mr. Donaldson—"the narrowness and distanc of the stage rendered any (free and complex) grouping unadvisabl The arrangement of the actors was that of a processional bas relie Their movements were slow, their gesticulations abrupt and angula and their delivery a sort of loud and deep-drawn sing-song, whic resounded throughout the immense theatre. They probably neg lected everything like *by-play* and *making points*, which are s effective on the English stage. The distance at which the spectator were placed would prevent them from seeing those little movement and hearing those low tones which have made the fortune of man a modern actor. The mask, too, precluded all attempts at varie expression, and it is probable that nothing more was expected fro the performer than was looked for from his predecessor, the rhap sode—viz., good recitation." These observations, flowing from realization of the known circumstances of the case, will sufficientl explain to the modern reader the extreme stiffness and formalit which distinguishes the tragic dialogue of the Greeks from tha dexterous and various play of verbal interchange which delights u so much in Shakespere and the other masters of English tragedy Every view, in short, that we can take, tends to fix our attention o the musical and the religious elements, as on the life-blood and vita soul of the Hellenic *τραγῳδία*; forces us to the conclusion that with a due regard to organic principle, its proper designation i SACRED OPERA,* and not TRAGEDY, in the modern sense of the word

* Writers on Belles Lettres, from TRAPP down to SCHLEGEL, have been very severe o the modern opera, and indignantly repudiated all comparison between it and the Grec tragedy. It is a common illusion of mental optics with the learned to magnify th defects of what is near and before their nose, while the peculiar excellencies of what is fa distant in time or space are in a corresponding degree exalted. So SCHLEGEL, in hi sublime German zeal against certain shallow judgments of Voltaire and other Frenc critics, worked himself up into an idealized enthusiasm for some of the most glarin imperfections of the Greek stage, while in the modern opera he only sees the absurditie of the real. In assuming this tone he has, of course, been imitated by certain persons o little speculation in this country, who have thought it necessary slavishly to worship th Germans in all things, merely because certain other persons of no speculation ignorantly despised them. With regard to the opera, it is plain enough that it differs from th ancient tragedy in the following points:—(1) In not being essentially of a religious character; (2) in not varying the musical with the declamatory element; (3) in dealing more in monody, and less in choral singing; (4) in using the Chorus freely, according t the nature of the action, and not being always encumbered with it; (5) in making th mere musical element so predominate that poets of the first order seldom condescend t employ their talents in writing the text for an opera. All these special differences however, do not mar the propriety of the general comparison between an ancient "goat song" and a modern opera, justified, as it is, plainly by the common musical element which both contain in different degrees of prominence. In point of high moral tone high poetic diction, and noble conception, the ancient lyrical drama is no doubt vastly superior to the modern opera; but in some other points, as in the more free and adroit use of the Chorus, the opera is as much superior to the goat-song. With respect to the CHORUS in particular, SCHLEGEL has said many things that look very wise, but are simply not true. The Chorus is only half described (see above, p. 20), when it is called the "ideal spectator." What he says about *publicity* is mere talk. There is no other reason for the presence of the Chorus than because it was originally the essential part of the performance, and could not but be to the end the most popular.

at all; and leads us to look on the dramatic art altogether in the hands of Æschylus, not as an infant Hercules strangling serpents, but as a Titan, like his own Prometheus, chained to a rock, whom only, after many ages, a strong Saxon Shakespere could unbind.

To conclude. If these observations shall seem to any conceived in a style too depreciatory of the masterpieces of Hellenic art, such persons will observe, that what has been here said of a negative character has reference only to the form of these productions as works of art, and not to their poetic contents. An unfortunate external arrangement is often, as in the case of the German writer Richter, united in intimate amalgamation with the richest and most exuberant energy of intellectual and moral life. However imperfect the Greek "tragedies" are as forms of artistic exhibition, they are not the less admirable, for the mass of healthy poetic life of which they are the embodiment, and the grand combination of artistic elements which they present. As among the world's notable men there are some who are great rather by a harmonious combination of the great healthy elements of humanity, than by the gigantic development of any one faculty, so in literature there are phenomena which must be measured by the mass of inward life which they concentrate, not by the structural perfection of form which they exhibit. The lyrical tragedy of the Greeks presents, in a combination elsewhere unexampled, the best elements of our serious drama, our opera, our oratorio, our public worship, and our festal recreations. The people who prepared and enjoyed such an intellectual banquet were not base-minded. Had their stability been equal to their susceptibility, the world had never seen their equal. As it is, they are like to remain for ages the great Hierophants of the intellectual world, whose influence will always be felt even by those who are ignorant or impudent enough to despise them; and among the various branches of art and science which owed a felicitous culture to their dexterous and subtle genius, there is certainly no phenomenon in the wide history of imaginative manifestation more imposing and more significant than that which bears on its face the signature of the rude god of wine, and his band of shaggy and goat-footed revellers.

THE LIFE OF ÆSCHYLUS

τοῦτον τὸν βακχεῖον ἄνακτα.—ARISTOPHANES.
. . . personæ pallæque repertor honestæ.—HORACE.

THE richest heritage that a great dramatic poet can receive fro the past, is a various store of legendary tradition, in the shape ballads or popular epos; the greatest present blessing that ca happen to him from Heaven, is to live in an age when every migh thought to which he can give utterance finds a ready response the hearts of the people, urged by the memory of great dee recently achieved, to aspire after greater yet to come. Both the blessings were enjoyed by the founder of the serious lyrical dram of the Greeks. In Homer, Æschylus recognised his heritage fro the past.* Marathon and Salamis were the first sublime motions those strong popular breezes by which the flight of his eagle mus was sustained.

The Parian marble, more trustworthy than the discordant stat ments of ill-informed, or ill-transcribed lexicographers and scholiast enables us to fix the date of Æschylus, in the year 525 before Chris Born an Athenian, in the deme of Eleusis, of an ancient and nob family, he had ample opportunity, by the contagion of the place, i his boyish days, of brooding over those lofty religious ideas whic formed the characteristic inspiration of his drama.† Pausania (I. 21) relates of him that, on one occasion, when he was watchin the vineyards as a mere boy, Dionysus appeared to him and ordere him to write dramas. Of this story, we may say that it either i true, literally, or invented to symbolize something that must hav been true. The next authentic fact in the life of the poet, testifie by Suidas, is that in his twenty-fifth year (499, B.C.), the same i which Sardes was burnt by the Ionians, he first appeared as a com petitor for the tragic prize. But, as the strongest intellectual geniu is often that which, like the oak, grows slowest, we do not find hi registered as having actually gained the prize in such a competitio till the lapse of sixteen years. Meanwhile, the soul of Greece ha been called out at Marathon to prepare the world, as it were, fo

* "Æschylus used to say that his tragedies were only slices cut from the great banque of Homeric dainties."—Athenæus, VIII. p. 348.

† In the FROGS (v. 886), Aristophanes makes him show at once the religiousness of hi character, and its source, in the two lines of invocation—

"O, thou that nourished my young soul, Demeter,
Make thou me worthy of thy mysteries!"

that brilliant display of self-dependence which was afterwards made at Salamis. At both these victories, which belonged to the world as much as to Greece, Æschylus was present, as also, according to some accounts, at Artemisium and Platæae—learning in all these encounters how much more noble it is to act poetry than to sing it, and borrowing from them certain high trumpet-notes of martial inspiration that stirred the soul deeper than any that could have been fetched from the fountains of Helicon, or the double peak of Parnassus. Braced in this best school of manhood, he continued his exertions as a dramatic poet, bringing gradually to firmness and maturity the dim broodings of his early years, till, in the year 484, according to the marble already quoted, he was publicly declared victor in that species of composition, of which, from the great improvement he made in it, he was afterwards to be celebrated as the father. In a few years after this, he, with his brother Ameinias, performed a distinguished part at the battle of Salamis; and this victory he eight years afterwards celebrated in his play of the PERSIANS, the earliest of his extant productions, of which the date is certainly known.* The next mention that we find of the poet, among the few stray and comparatively unimportant notices that remain, is that some time between the year 478, that is, two years after the battle of Salamis, and the year 467, he paid a visit to Sicily, and along with Pindar, Bacchylides, Simonides, and other famous poets, was hospitably entertained by Hieron the famous tyrant of Syracuse. The two dates mentioned are those which mark the beginning and the end of the reign of that ruler; within which period, of course, the visit to Sicily must have taken place. Plutarch, in his life of Cimon (c. 8), connects Æschylus' departure for Sicily with the first tragic victory gained by the young Sophocles in the year preceding the death of Hiero; but it is possible that this precise date may have no other foundation than the story which attributed the Sicilian journey of the elder bard to his envy of the rising greatness of the younger; an instance of that sort of impertinence in which small wits constantly indulge when they busy themselves to assign motives for the actions of great ones. But the precise period is of small moment. When in Sicily, we are told

* From the διδασκαλία, or note of the year of representation with the name of the author, in the argument to that play. On the arguments from internal evidence brought forward to prove that the SUPPLIANTS is the oldest extant play, I place no value whatever. The simplicity of structure proves nothing, because it proves too much. Several of the extant plays are equally simple. For aught we know, it may have been the practice of Æschylus to the very last, as we see in the case of the Choephoræ, to give the middle piece of his trilogies less breadth and variety than the opening and concluding ones; and it is almost certain that the SUPPLIANTS was either the second or the first play of a trilogy.

that Æschylus re-exhibited his play of the Persians,* and also wro a play called the AETNEANS, to celebrate the foundation of the ne city of Etna by his patron. This event, we are informed b Diodorus (xi. 49), took place in the year 476, a date which woul require the presence of the poet in Sicily six years before the da mentioned by Plutarch. Connected with Sicily, there is worthy mention also, in a life of Æschylus, the notable eruption of Etn which took place in the year 479—the same in which the battle Platæae took place†—because there is a distinct allusion to this i the Prometheus Bound (vol. II. p. 34), which enables us to say tha this famous drama could not have been written before the fort seventh year of the poet's life—that is to say, the full maturity his powers. The next date in the life of the poet, according to th recently discovered διδασκαλία to the SEVEN AGAINST THEBES,‡ i the representation of the great Oedipodean tetralogy in the yea 467; and the next date is a yet more important one, the year of th representation of that famous trilogy, still extant, which has alway been looked on as his masterpiece. The argument of the AGA MEMNON fixes the exhibition of the trilogy of which it is the firs piece, to the year of the archonship of Philocles, B.C. 458. It i known, also, that the poet died at Gela, in Sicily, two years after wards, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, the date being given in th marble; and there can be little doubt that the cause of this, hi final retirement to that island, must have been a growing distanc between him and the Athenian public, arising from diversity o political feeling, and the state of parties in the Attic capital. I that city, democracy had been in steady advance from the time o Cleisthenes (B.C. 509), and was now ebullient under the popula inspiration of the recent Persian wars, and glorified by the captain ship of Pericles. The tendencies of the poet of the Eumenides (a explained in the introduction to that play) were all aristocratic and it is in the highest degree probable that the reception given b democratic spectators to his eulogy of the aristocratic Court of th Areopagus, in the play just mentioned, may have been such as t induce him to consult his own comfort, if not his safety, by with drawing altogether from a scene where his continual presence migh only tend to irritate those whom it could not alter.

After his death the Athenians testified their esteem for hi character by decreeing—what was quite an extraordinary privileg

* Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 1060, Welcker's Tril. p. 475, and the *Vit. Robortel.* (which however, I have not seen).

† Mar. Par. ep. 53. Welcker's *Tril.* p. 116.

‡ See Introduction to that piece.

according to their stage practice—that his dramas might be exhibited at the great Dionysiac festivals, when their author could be no longer a competitor for the prize.* The people of Gela, justly proud that the bones of so great a man should repose in their soil, erected a monument to his memory with the following inscription :—

"Here Æschylus lies, from his Athenian home
Remote, 'neath Gela's wheat-producing loam.
How brave in battle was Euphorion's son
The long-haired Mede can tell that fled from Marathon."

With regard to the great merits of Æschylus both as a poet and as the creator of the tragic stage, there is but one testimony among the writers of antiquity. He not only introduced, as we have elsewhere stated, a second, and afterwards a third actor—without which there was no scope for the proper representation of an action—but he made the greatest improvements in the whole machinery and decorations of the stage, gave dignity to the actors by a minute attention to their masks, dresses, and buskins,† besides attending specially to the graceful culture of the dance, according to the testimony of Athenæus above quoted. As a dramatist he is distinguished by peculiar loftiness of conception and grandeur of phraseology. His style is sometimes harsh and abrupt, but it is always manly and vigorous; his metaphors are bold and striking, with something at times almost oriental in their cast; and, though not free from the offence of mixing incongruous metaphors—the natural sin of an imagination at once fearless and fertile—I do not think he can be fairly charged with turgidity and bombast; for, as Aristophanes remarks, in the FROGS, there is a superhuman grandeur about his characters which demands a more than common elevation of phrase.‡ As to the obscurity with which he has been charged,

* Scholiast, Aristoph. Acharn. v. 10.

† PHILOSTRATUS, Vit. Soph. I. 9; Vit. Apollon. VI. 11, p. 244.

‡ The great comedian is particularly amusing in the contrast which he draws between the rude instinctive grandeur of the Æschylean diction and the elegant rhetorical decorations of Euripides :—

"With high-sounding words he will make such a pother,
With helmeted speeches he bravely will spout;
With chippings and shavings of rhetoric the other
All whirling and dancing about
Will stand at bay; but the deep-thoughted bard,
With equestrian harmonies, galloping hard,
Will floor in the fight
The glib-tongued wight.
The stiff hair of his mane all alive for the fray,
Bristling and big from the roots he will ruffle;
His black brows he will knit, and terribly bray,
Like a lion that roars for the scuffle.
Huge words by rivets and spike-nails bound,
Like plank on plank he will fling on the ground,
Blasting so bold
Like a Titan of old."

the comparative clearness of those plays which have been mo
frequently transcribed is a plain indication that this fault procee
more from the carelessness of stupid copyists, than from confusion
thought or inadequate power of expression in the writer. In son
cases, as in the prophecy of Calchas in the opening scene
the AGAMEMNON, the obscurity is studied and most appropriat
Poetry, like painting, will have its shade. But the great excellen
of Æschylus, as a poet, is the bracing tone of thorough manhoo
noble morality, and profound piety which pervades his work
Among those who are celebrated by Virgil as walking with Orphe
and Musæus in blissful Elysium—

"QUIQUE PII VATES ET PHOEBO DIGNA LOCUTI,"

the poet of the EUMENIDES deserves the first rank. There is
tradition current, in various shapes, among the ancient writers th
he was brought before the Court of the Areopagus (so nobly eul
gised by himself), on the charge of impiety, but that he was acquitte
That the Athenians might have taken offence at the freedom an
boldness with which he handled religious, as other topics, is possibl
though certainly by no means probable, considering how little
fixed doctrine there was in their imaginative theology; but it
more like the truth, according to the accounts which we have, tha
the offence which he gave consisted in some purely accidenta
allusion occurring in one of his plays, to some points that were,
seemed to be connected with the awful Eleusinian mysteries.
Certain it is that no writer could be less justly charged with impiet
or irreligion. In his writings, religion is the key-note; and th
noblest moral sentiments spring everywhere from the profounde
faith in a system of retribution carried on by the various personage
of the great celestial aristocracy, of which Jove is the all-powerfu
and the all-wise head. So sublime, indeed, is the Æschylean theo
logy, that certain modern writers, as if unwilling to think that suc
pure notions could co-exist with a belief in the popular religio
have concluded that the poet, like Euripides afterwards, must hav
been a free-thinker; and have imagined that they have found sur
indications to this effect in his writings. But, though Æschylus wa
a Pythagorean (Cic. Tusc. II. 10), we have no proof that the Pytha
goreans, any more than their successors, the Platonists, were give
to scepticism. The seriousness of a poetic mind like that
Æschylus is, at all times, naturally inclined to faith; and the multi

* ARISTOTLE, Ethic. Nicom. III. 1. CLEMEN. ALEX., Strom II. 14, p. 461. POR
Aelian, V.H.V. 19, and WELCKER, Trilog. p. 106.

form polytheism of the Greeks was as pliable in the hands of pure men for pure purposes, as in the hands of gross men, to give a delusive ideality to their grossness.[1]

1 The primary authorities for the life of Æschylus are the PARIAN MARBLE, the Βίος Αισχύλου, the FROGS of ARISTOPHANES, the arguments of the extant plays, and various incidental notices in ATHENÆUS and other ancient authors, most of whom have been quoted or mentioned in the text. With regard to secondary sources of information, the present writer has been much assisted, and had his labour essentially curtailed, by PETERSEN'S *Vita Æschyli*, Havniae, 1812; the article ÆSCHYLUS, by WHISTON, in Dr. SMITH'S Dictionary of Biography and Mythology; the admirable condensed summary in BERNHARDY'S *Grundriss der Griechischen Litteratur, 2ter, Theil*, HALLE, 1845; and DONALDSON'S Greek Theatre. In Chronology, I have followed CLINTON.

AGAMEMNON

A LYRICO-DRAMATIC SPECTACLE

"Οι Τρώων μεν ὑπεξέφυγον στονόεσσαν ἀϋτὴν
Ἐν νόστῳ δ' ἀπόλοντο κακῆς ἰότητι γυναικός."

"Greeks that 'scaped the Trojan war-cry, and the wailing battle-field,
But home returning basely perished by a wicked woman's guile."

HOMER, *Odys.* xi. 383–4.

PERSONS

WATCHMAN.
CHORUS OF ARGIVE ELDERS.
CLYTEMNESTRA, Wife of Agamemnon.
HERALD.
AGAMEMNON, King of Argos and Mycenæ.
CASSANDRA, a Trojan Prophetess, Daughter of Priam.
ÆGISTHUS, Son of Thyestes.

SCENE—*The Royal Palace in Argos.*

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Of all that rich variety of Epic materials with which the early minstrel-literature of Greece supplied the drama of a future age, there was no more notable cycle among the ancients than that which went by the popular name of Νόστοι, or the *Returns;* comprehending an account of the adventures that befell the various Hellenic heroes of the Trojan war in their return home. To this cycle, in its most general acceptation, the Odyssey itself belongs; though the name of Νόστοι, according to the traditions of the ancient grammarians, is more properly confined to a legendary Epic, composed by an old poet, Agias of Troezene, of which the return of Agamemnon and Menelaus forms the principal subject. Of this Epos the grammarian Proclus* gives us the following abstract:—

"Athena raises a strife between Agamemnon and Menelaus concerning their voyage homeward. Agamemnon remains behind, in order to pacify the wrath of Athena; but Diomede and Nestor depart, and return in safety to their own country. After them Menelaus sails, and arrives with five ships in Egypt; the rest of his vessels having been lost in a storm. Meanwhile, Calchas and Leonteus and Polypœtes go to Colophon, and celebrate the funeral obsequies of Tiresias, who had died there. There is then introduced the shade of Achilles appearing to Agamemnon, and warning him of the dangers that he was about to encounter. Then follows a storm as the fleet is passing the Capharean rocks, at the south promontory of Eubœa, on which occasion the Locrian Ajax is destroyed by the wrath of Athena, whom he had offended. Neoptolemus, on the other hand, under the protection of Thetis, makes his way overland through Thrace (where he encounters Ulysses in Maronea), to his native country, and proceeding to the country of the Molossi, is there recognised by his grandfather, the aged Peleus, the father of Achilles. The poem then concludes with an account of the murder of Agamemnon by Ægisthus and Clytemnestra, of the revenge taken on her by Orestes and Pylades, and of the return of Menelaus to Lacedæmon."†

* Welcker, in the introductory remarks to his *Epischer Cyclus* (§ 1), has given what appear to me sufficient reasons for not confounding this Proclus with the famous Platonist of the same name.

† This and other curious fragments from the wreck of the old Hellenic epos, will be found in Becker's Scholia to Homer (Berlin, 1825), or in the second volume of Welcker's Epic Cycle (Bonn, 1849), in the Appendix.

The last sentence of this curious notice contains the Epic germ of which the famous trilogy—the Agamemnon, the Choephorœ, and the Eumenides of Æschylus—the three plays contained in the present volume, present the dramatic expansion. The celebrity of the legends with regard to the return of the mighty Atridan arose naturally from the prominent situation in which he stood as the admiral of the famous thousand-masted fleet; and, besides, the passage from the old Troezenian minstrel just quoted, is sufficiently attested by various passages—some of considerable length—in the Odyssey, which will readily present themselves to the memory of those who are familiar with the productions of the great Ionic Epopœist. In the very opening of that poem, for instance, occur the following remarkable lines:—

"Strange, O strange, that mortal men immortal gods will still be blaming,
Saying that the source of evil lies with us; while they, in sooth,
More than Fate would have infatuate with sharp sorrows pierce themselves!
Thus even now Ægisthus, working sorrow more than Fate would have,
The Atridan's wife hath wedded, and himself returning slain,
Knowing well the steep destruction that awaits him; for ourselves
Sent the sharp-eyed Argus-slayer, Hermes, to proclaim our will,
That nor him he dare to murder, nor his wedded wife to woo.
Thus spoke Hermes well and wisely; but thy reckless wit, Ægisthus,
Moved he not; full richly therefore now thy folly's fine thou payest."

And the same subject is reverted to in the Third Book (v. 194), where old Nestor, in Pylos, gives an account to Telemachus, first of his own safe return, and then of the fate of the other Greeks, so far as he knew; and, again, in the Fourth Book (v. 535) where Menelaus is informed of his brother's sad fate (slain "like a bull in a stall") by the old prophetic Proteus, the sea harlequin of the African coast; and, also, in the Eleventh Book (v. 405), where Ulysses, in Hades, hears the sad recital from the injured shade of the royal Atridan himself.

The tragic events by which Agamemnon and his family have acquired such a celebrity in the epic and dramatic annals of Greece, are but the sequel and consummation of a series of similar events commencing with the great ancestor of the family; all which hang together in the chain of popular tradition by the great moral principle so often enunciated in the course of these dramas, that sin has always a tendency to propagate its like, and a root of bitterness once planted in a family, will grow up and branch out luxuriantly, till, in the fulness of time, it bears those bloody blossoms, and fruits of perdition that are its natural product. The guilty ancestor, in the present case, is the

well-known Tantalus, the peculiar style of whose punishment in the infernal regions has been stereotyped, for the modern memory, in the shape of one of the most common and most expressive words in the English language. Tantalus, a son of Jove, a native of Sipylos in Phrygia, and who had been admitted to the table of the gods, thinking it a small matter to know the divine counsels, if he did not, at the same time, gratify his vanity by making a public parade of his knowledge before profane ears, was punished in the pit of Tartarus by those tortures of ever reborn and never gratified desire which every schoolboy knows. His son, Pelops, an exile from his native country, comes with great wealth to Pisa; and having, by stratagem, won, in a chariot race, Hippodamia, the daughter of Oernomaus, king of that place, himself succeeded to the kingdom, and became so famous, according to the legend, as to lend a new name to the southern peninsula of Greece which was the theatre of his exploits.* In his career also, however, the traces of blood are not wanting, which soil so darkly the path of his no less famous descendants. Pelops slew Myrtilus, the charioteer by whose aid he had won the race that was the beginning of his greatness; and it was the Fury of this Myrtilus—or "his blood crying to Heaven," as in Christian style we should express it—that, according to one poet (Eurip. Orest. 981), gave rise to the terrible retributions of blood by which the history of the Pelopidan family is marked. Of Pelops, according to the common account, Atreus and Thyestes were the sons. These having murdered their stepbrother, Chrysippus, were obliged to flee for safety to Mycenæ, in Argolis, where, in the course of events, they afterwards established themselves, and became famous for their wealth and for their crimes. The bloody story of these hostile brothers commences with the seduction, by Thyestes, of Acrope, the wife of Atreus; in revenge for which insult, Atreus recalls his banished brother, and, pretending reconciliation, offers that horrid feast of human flesh—the blood of the children to the lips of the father—from which the sun turned away his face in horror. The effect of this deed of blood was to entail, between the two families of Thyestes and Atreus, a hereditary hostility, the fruits of which appeared afterwards in the person of Ægisthus, the son of the former, who is found, in this first play of the trilogy, engaged with Clytemnestra in a treacherous plot to avenge his father's wrongs, by the murder of his uncle's son.

Agamemnon, the son, or, according to a less common account (for which see Schol. ad Iliad II. 249), the grandson of Atreus, being

* See Thucydides, I. 9.

distinguished above the other Hellenic princes for wealth and power, was either by special election appointed, or by that sort of irregular kingship common among half-civilized nations, allowed to conduct the famous expedition against Troy that in early times foreshadowed the conquests of Alexander the Great, and the influence of the Greek language and letters in the East. Such a distant expedition as this, like the crusades in the middle ages, was not only a natural living Epos in itself, but would necessarily give rise to that intense glow of popular sympathy, and that excited state of the popular imagination, which enable the wandering poets of the people to make the best poetic use of the various dramatic incidents that the realities of a highly potentiated history present. Accordingly we find, in the very outset of the expedition, the fleet, storm-bound in the harbour of Aulis, opposite Eubœa, enabled to pursue its course, under good omens, only by the sacrifice of the fairest daughter of the chief. This event—a sad memorial of the barbarous practice of human sacrifice, even among the polished Greeks—formed the subject of a special play, perhaps a trilogic series of plays,* by Æschylus. This performance, however, has been unfortunately lost; and we can only imagine what it may have been by the description in the opening chorus of the present play, and by the beautiful, though certainly far from Æschylean, tragedy of Euripides. For our present purpose, it is sufficient to note that, in the Agamemnon, special reference is made to the sacrifice of Iphigenia, both as an unrighteous deed on the part of the father, for which some retribution was naturally to be expected, and as the origin of a special grudge in the mind of the mother, which she afterwards gratifies by the murder of her husband.

As to that deed of blood itself, and its special adaptation for dramatic purposes, there can be no doubt; as little that Æschylus has used his materials in the present play in a fashion that satisfies the highest demands both of lyric and dramatic poetry, as executed by the first masters of both. The calm majesty and modest dignity of the much-tried monarch; the cool self-possession, and the smooth front of specious politeness that mark the character of the royal murderess: the obstreperous bullying of the cowardly braggart, who does the deed with his heart, not with his hand; the half-wild, half-tender ravings of the horror-haunted Trojan prophetess; these together contain a combination of highly wrought dramatic ele-

* See Welcker's *Trilogie*, Darmstadt, 1824, p. 408, who, however, here, as in other parts of the same learned work, expends much superfluity of ingenious conjecture on subjects which, from their very nature, are necessarily barren of any certain result.

ments, such as is scarcely excelled even in the all-embracing pages of our own Shakespere. As far removed from common-place are the lyrical—in Æschylus never the secondary—elements of the piece. The sublime outbreak of Cassandra's prophetic horror is, as the case demanded, made to exhibit itself as much under the lyric as in the declamatory form; while the other choral parts, remarkable for length and variety, are marked not only by that mighty power of intense moral feeling which is so peculiarly Æschylean, but by the pictorial beauty and dramatic reality that distinguish the workmanship of a great lyric master from that of the vulgar dealer in inflated sentiment and sonorous sentences.

AGAMEMNON

Watch. I pray the gods a respite from these toils,
This long year's watch that, dog-like, I have kept,
High on the Atridan's battlements,[1] beholding
The nightly council of the stars, the circling
Of the celestial signs, and those bright regents,
High-swung in ether, that bring mortal men
Summer and winter. Here I watch the torch,
The appointed flame that wings a voice from Troy,
Telling of capture; thus I serve her hopes,
The masculine-minded who is sovereign here.[2]
And when night-wandering shades encompass round
My dew-sprent dreamless couch (for fear doth sit
In slumber's chair, and holds my lids apart),
I chaunt some dolorous ditty, making song,
Sleep's substitute, surgeon my nightly care,
And the misfortunes of this house I weep,
Not now, as erst, by prudent counsels swayed.
Oh! soon may the wished for sign relieve my toils,
Thrice-welcome herald, gleaming through the night!

[*The beacon is seen shining.*]

All hail thou cresset of the dark! fair gleam
Of day through midnight shed, all hail! bright father
Of joy and dance, in Argos, hail! all hail!
Hillo! hilloa!
I will go tell the wife of Agamemnon
To shake dull sleep away, and lift high-voiced[3]
The jubilant shout well-omened, to salute
This welcome beacon; if, indeed, old Troy
Hath fallen—as flames this courier torch to tell.
Myself will dance the prelude to this joy.
My master's house hath had a lucky throw,
And thrice six falls to me,[4] thanks to the flame!
Soon may he see his home; and soon may I
Carry my dear-loved master's hand in mine!
The rest I whisper not, for on my tongue
Is laid a seal.[5] These walls, if they could speak,

Would say strange things. Myself to those that know
Am free of speech, to whoso knows not dumb. [*Exit.*

Enter CHORUS *in procession. March time.*

Nine years have rolled, the tenth is rolling,
Since the strong Atridan pair,
Menelaus and Agamemnon,
Sceptred kings by Jove's high grace,[6]
With a host of sworn alliance,
With a thousand triremes rare,
With a righteous strong defiance,
Sailed for Troy. From furious breast
Loud they clanged the peal of battle;
Like the cry of vultures wild
O'er the lone paths fitful-wheeling,[7]
With their plumy oarage oaring
Over the nest by the spoiler spoiled,
The nest dispeopled now and bare,
Their long but fruitless care.
But the gods see it: some Apollo,
Pan or Jove, the wrong hath noted,
Heard the sharp and piercing cry
Of the startled birds, shrill-throated
Tenants of the sky;
And the late-chastising Fury[8]
Sent from above to track the spoiler,
Hovers vengeful nigh.

Thus great Jove, the high protector
Of the hospitable laws,[9]
'Gainst Alexander sends the Atridans,
Harnessed in a woman's cause,
The many-lorded fair.
Toils on toils shall come uncounted,
(Jove hath willed it so);
Limb-outwearying hard endeavour,
Where the strong knees press the dust,
Where the spear-shafts split and shiver,
Trojan and Greek shall know.
But things are as they are: the chain
Of Fate doth bind them; sighs are vain,
Tears, libations, fruitless flow,
To divert from purposed ire
The powers whose altars know no fire.[10]

But we behind that martial train
Inglorious left remain,
Old and frail, and feebly leaning
Strength as of childhood on a staff.
Yea! even as life's first unripe marrow
In the tender bones are we,
From war's harsh service free.
For hoary Eld, life's leaf up-shrunken,
Totters, his three-footed way
Feebly feeling, weak as childhood,
Like a dream that walks by day.
But what is this? what wandering word,
Clytemnestra queen, hath reached thee?
What hast seen? or what hast heard
That from street to street swift flies
Thy word, commanding sacrifice?
All the altars of all the gods
That keep the city, gods supernal,
Gods Olympian, gods infernal,
Gods of the Forum, blaze with gifts;
Right and left the flame mounts high,
Spiring to the sky,
With the gentle soothings cherished
Of the oil that knows no malice,[11]
And the sacred cake that smokes
From the queen's chamber in the palace.
What thou canst and may'st, declare;
Be the healer of the care
That bodes black harm within me; change it
To the bright and hopeful ray,
Which from the altar riseth, chasing
From the heart the sateless sorrow
That eats vexed life away.

The CHORUS, *having now arranged themselves into a regular band in the middle of the Orchestra, sing the First*

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE.

I'll voice the strain.[12] What though the arm be weak
That once was strong,
The suasive breath of Heaven-sent memories stirs
The old man's breast with song.
My age hath virtue left

To sing what fateful omens strangely beckoned
The twin kings to the fray,
What time to Troy concentuous marched
The embattled Greek array.
Jove's swooping bird, king of all birds,* led on
The kings of the fleet with spear and vengeful hand:
By the way-side from shining seats serene,
Close by the palace, on the spear-hand seen,†
Two eagles flapped the air,
One black, the other silver-tipt behind,
And with keen talons seized a timorous hare,
Whose strength could run no more,
Itself, and the live burden which it bore.
Sing woe and well-a-day! But still
May the good omens shame the ill.

ANTISTROPHE.

The wise diviner of the host ‡ beheld,
And knew the sign;
The hare-devouring birds with diverse wings
Typed the Atridan pair,
The diverse-minded kings;[18]
And thus the fate he chaunted:—Not in vain
Ye march this march to-day;
Old Troy shall surely fall, but not
Till moons on moons away
Have lingering rolled. Rich stores by labour massed
Clean-sweeping Fate shall plunder. Grant the gods,
While this strong bit for Troy we forge with gladness,
No heavenly might in jealous wrath o'ercast
Our mounting hope with sadness.
For the chaste Artemis§ a sore grudge nurses
Against the kings; Jove's winged hounds she curses,[14]
The fierce war-birds that tore
The fearful hare, with the young brood it bore.
Sing woe and well-a-day! but still
May the good omens shame the ill.

* Jove to Priam sent the eagle, of all flying things that be
Noblest made, his dark-winged hunter.

† *i.e.* The right hand—the hand which brandishes the spear, χερὸς ἐκ δορικτάλτου; the right being the lucky side in Greek augury.—ILIAD, xxiv. 320.

‡ Calchas, the famous soothsayer of the Iliad. § Diana.

EPODE.

The lion's fresh-dropt younglings, and each whelp
That sucks wild milk, and through the forest roves,
Live not unfriended; them the fair goddess loves,[15]
And lends her ready help.
The vision of the birds shall work its end
In bliss, but dashed not lightly with black bane;*
I pray thee, Pæan, may she never send[16]
Contrarious blasts dark-lowering, to detain
The Argive fleet.
Ah! ne'er may she desire to feast her eyes
On an unblest unholy sacrifice,
From festal use abhorrent, mother of strife,
And sundering from her lawful lord the wife.†
Stern-purposed waits the child-avenging wrath[17]
About the fore-doomed halls,
Weaving dark wiles, while with sure-memoried sting
Fury to Fury calls.
Thus hymned the seer, the doom, in dubious chaunt
Bliss to the chiefs dark-mingling with the bane,
From the way-haunting birds; and we
Respondent to the strain,
Sing woe and well-a-day! but still
May the good omens shame the ill.

STROPHE I.

Jove, or what other name[18]
The god that reigns supreme delights to claim,
Him I invoke; him of all powers that be,
Alone I find,
Who from this bootless load of doubt can free
My labouring mind.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Who was so great of yore,
With all-defiant valour brimming o'er,[19]
Is mute; and who came next by a stronger arm
Thrice-vanquished fell;
But thou hymn victor Jove: so in thy heart
His truth shall dwell.

* This excellent version I took from an article in the *Quarterly Review*.—Vol. lxx. p. 340.

† The sacrifice of Iphigenia displeasing to Clytemnestra.

STROPHE II.

For Jove doth teach men wisdom, sternly wins
To virtue by the tutoring of their sins;
Yea! drops of torturing recollection chill
The sleeper's heart; 'gainst man's rebellious will
Jove works the wise remorse:
Dread Powers, on awful seats enthroned, compel
Our hearts with gracious force.[20]

ANTISTROPHE II.

The elder chief, the leader of the ships,
Heard the dire doom, nor dared to ope his lips
Against the seer, and feared alone to stand
'Gainst buffeting fate, what time the Chalcian strand*
Saw the vexed Argive masts
In Aulis tides hoarse-refluent,[21] idly chained
By the fierce Borean blasts;

STROPHE III.

Blasts from Strymon† adverse braying,
Harbour-vexing, ship-delaying,
Snapping cables, shattering oars,
Wasting time, consuming stores,
With vain-wandering expectation,
And with long-drawn slow vexation
Wasting Argive bloom.
At length the seer forth-clanged the doom,
A remedy strong to sway the breeze,
And direful Artemis to appease,
But to the chiefs severe:
The Atridans with their sceptres struck the ground,
Nor could restrain the tear.

ANTISTROPHE III.

Then spake the elder. To deny,
How hard! still harder to comply!
My daughter dear, my joy, my life,
To slay with sacrificial knife,
And with life's purple-gushing tide,
Imbrue a father's hand, beside
The altar of the gods.
This way or that is ill: for how
Shall I despise my federate vow?

* Chalcis, a city in Eubœa, opposite Aulis. † A river in Macedonia.

How leave the ships? That all conspire
Thus hotly to desire
The virgin's blood—wind-soothing sacrifice—
Is the gods' right. So be it.[22]

STROPHE IV.

Thus to necessity's harsh yoke he bared
His patient neck. Unblissful blew the gale
That turned the father's heart[23]
To horrid thoughts unholy, thoughts that dared
The extreme of daring. Sin from its primal spring
Mads the ill-counsell'd heart, and arms the hand
With reckless strength. Thus he
Gave his own daughter's blood, his life, his joy,
To speed a woman's war, and consecrate[24]
His ships for Troy.

ANTISTROPHE IV.

In vain with prayers, in vain she beats dull ears
With a father's name; the war-delighting chiefs
Heed not her virgin years.
The father stood; and when the priests had prayed,
Take her, he said; in her loose robes enfolden,
Where prone and spent she lies,[25] so lift the maid;
Even as a kid is laid,
So lay her on the altar; with dumb force
Her beauteous* mouth gag, lest it breathe a voice
Of curse to Argos.

STROPHE V.

And as they led the maid, her saffron robe[26]
Sweeping the ground, with pity-moving dart
She smote each from her eye,
Even as a picture beautiful, fain to speak,
But could not. Well that voice they knew of yore;
Oft at her father's festive board,
With gallant banqueters ringed cheerly round,
The virgin strain they heard[27]
That did so sweetly pour
Her father's praise, whom Heaven had richly crowned
With bounty brimming o'er.

* The epithet καλλιπρώρου, *beautiful fronted*, applied to στόματος, being contrary to the genius of the English language, the translator must content himself with the simple epithet.

ANTISTROPHE V.

The rest I know not, nor will vainly pry;
But Calchas was a seer not wont to lie.
Justice doth wait to teach
Wisdom by suffering. Fate will have its way.
The quickest ear is pricked in vain to-day,
To catch to-morrow's note. What boots
To forecast woe, which, on no wavering wing,[28]
The burthen'd hour shall bring.
But we, a chosen band,
Left here sole guardians of the Apian land,*
Pray Heaven, all good betide!

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA.

Chorus. Hail Clytemnestra! honour to thy sceptre!
When her lord's throne is vacant, the wife claims
His honour meetly. Queen, if thou hast heard
Good news, or to the hope of good that shall be,
With festal sacrifice dost fill the city,
I fain would know; but nothing grudge thy silence.

Clytem. Bearing blithe tidings, saith the ancient saw,
Fair Morn be gendered from boon mother Night!
News thou shalt hear beyond thy topmost hope;
The Greeks have ta'en old Priam's city.

Chorus. How!
Troy taken! the word drops from my faithless ear.

Clytem. The Greeks have taken Troy. Can I speak plainer?

Chorus. Joy o'er my heart creeps, and provokes the tear.

Clytem. Thine eye accuses thee that thou art kind.

Chorus. What warrant of such news? What certain sign?

Clytem. Both sign and seal, unless some god deceive me.

Chorus. Dreams sometimes speak; did suasive visions mov
thee?

Clytem. Where the soul sleeps, and the sense slumbers, there
Shall the wise ask for reasons?

Chorus. Ever swift
Though wingless, Fame,[29] with tidings fair hath cheere
thee.

Clytem. Thou speak'st as one who mocks a simple girl.

Chorus. Old Troy is taken? how?—when did it fall?

Clytem. The self-same night that mothers this to-day.

Chorus. But how? what stalwart herald ran so fleetly?

* An old name for the Peloponnesus.

Clytem. Hephæstus.* He from Ida shot the spark;[30]
And flaming straightway leapt the courier fire
From height to height; to the Hermæan rock
Of Lemnos, first from Ida; from the isle
The Athóan steep of mighty Jove received
The beaming beacon; thence the forward strength
Of the far-travelling lamp strode gallantly[31]
Athwart the broad sea's back. The flaming pine
Rayed out a golden glory like the sun,
And winged the message to Macistus' watch-tower.
There the wise watchman, guiltless of delay,
Lent to the sleepless courier further speed;
And the Messapian station hailed the torch
Far-beaming o'er the floods of the Eurípus.
There the grey heath lit the responsive fire,
Speeding the portioned message; waxing strong,
And nothing dulled across Asopus' plain
The flame swift darted like the twinkling moon,
And on Cithæron's rocky heights awaked
A new receiver of the wandering light.
The far-sent ray, by the faithful watch not spurned,
With bright addition journeying, bounded o'er
Gorgópus' lake and Ægiplanctus' mount,
Weaving the chain unbroken.[32] Hence it spread
Not scant in strength, a mighty beard of flame,[33]
Flaring across the headlands that look down
On the Saronic gulf.[34] Speeding its march,
It reached the neighbour-station of our city,
Arachne's rocky steep; and thence the halls
Of the Atridæ recognised the signal,
Light not unfathered by Idæan fire.
Such the bright train of my torch-bearing heralds,
Each from the other fired with happy news,
And last and first was victor in the race.[35]
Such the fair tidings that my lord hath sent,
A sign that Troy hath fallen.

Chorus. And for its fall
Our voice shall hymn the gods anon: meanwhile
I'm fain to drink more wonder from thy words.

Clytem. This day Troy fell. Methinks I see't; a host
Of jarring voices stirs the startled city,
Like oil and acid, sounds that will not mingle,

* Vulcan.

By natural hatred sundered. Thou may'st hear
Shouts of the victor, with the dying groan,
Battling, and captives' cry; upon the dead—
Fathers and mothers, brothers, sisters, wives—
The living fall—the young upon the old;
And from enthralléd necks wail out their woe.
Fresh from the fight, through the dark night the spoilers
Tumultuous rush where hunger spurs them on,
To feast on banquets never spread for them.
The homes of captive Trojan chiefs they share
As chance decides the lodgment; there secure
From the cold night-dews and the biting frosts,
Beneath the lordly roof, to their hearts' content [36]
They live, and through the watchless night prolong
Sound slumbers. Happy if the native gods
They reverence, and the captured altars spare,[37]
Themselves not captive led by their own folly!
May no unbridled lust of unjust gain
Master their hearts, no reckless rash desire!
Much toil yet waits them. Having turned the goal,[38]
The course's other half they must mete out,
Ere home receive them safe. Their ships must brook
The chances of the sea; and, these being scaped,
If they have sinned [39] the gods their own will claim,
And vengeance wakes till blood shall be atoned.
I am a woman; but mark thou well my words;
I hint the harm; but with no wavering scale,
Prevail the good! I thank the gods who gave me
Rich store of blessings, richly to enjoy.

Chorus. Woman, thou speakest wisely as a man,
And kindly as thyself. But having heard
The certain signs of Agamemnon's coming,
Prepare we now to hymn the gods; for surely
With their strong help we have not toiled in vain.

O regal Jove! O blessed Night!
Thou hast won thee rich adornments,
Thou hast spread thy shrouding meshes
O'er the towers of Priam. Ruin
Whelms the young, the old. In vain
Shall they strive to o'erleap the snare,
And snap the bondsman's galling chain,
In woe retrieveless lost.

Jove, I fear thee, just protector
Of the wrong'd host's sacred rights;
Thou didst keep thy bow sure bent
'Gainst Alexander; not before
The fate-predestined hour, and not
Beyond the stars, with idle aim,
Thy cunning shaft was shot.

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

The hand of Jove hath smote them; thou
May'st trace it plainly;
What the god willed, behold it now
Not purposed vainly!
The gods are blind,[40] and little caring,
So one hath said, to mark the daring
Of men, whose graceless foot hath ridden
O'er things to human touch forbidden.
Godless who said so; sons shall rue
Their parents' folly,
Who flushed with wealth, with insolence flown,
The sober bliss of man outgrown,
The trump of Mars unchastened blew,
And stirred red strife without the hue
Of justice wholly.
Live wiselier thou; not waxing gross
With gain, thou shalt be free from loss.
Weak is his tower, with pampering wealth
In brief alliance
Who spurns great Justice' altar dread
With damned defiance;
Him the deep hell shall claim, and shame
His vain reliance.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Self-will fell Até's daughter,[41] still
Fore-counselling ruin,
Shall spur him on resistless borne
To his undoing.
Fined with sharp loss beyond repairing,
His misery like a beacon flaring,
Shall shine to all. Like evil brass,
That tested shows a coarse black mass,
His deep distemper he shall show

By dints of trial.
Even as a boy in wanton sport,[42]
Chasing a bird to his own hurt,
And to the state's redeemless loss,
Whom, when he prays, the gods shall cross
With sheer denial,
And sweep the lewd and lawless liver
From earth's fair memory for ever;
Thus to the Atridans' palace came
False Alexander,
And shared the hospitable board,
A bold offender,
Filching his host's fair wife away
To far Scamander.

STROPHE II.

She went, and to the Argive city left
Squadrons shield-bearing,
Battle preparing,
Swords many-flashing,
Oars many-plashing;
She went, destruction for her dowry bearing,
To the Sigean shore;
Light with swift foot she brushed the doorstead, daring
A deed undared before.
The prophets of the house loud wailing,[43]
Cried with sorrow unavailing,
"Woe to the Atridans! woe!
The lofty palaces fallen low!
The marriage and the marriage bed,
The steps once faithful, fond to follow
There where the faithful husband led!"
He silent stood in sadness, not in wrath,[44]
His own eye scarce believing,
As he followed her flight beyond the path
Of the sea-wave broadly heaving.
And phantoms sway each haunt well known,
Which the lost loved one wont to own,
And the statued forms that look from their seats
With a cold smile serenely,
He loathes to look on; in his eye
Pines Aphrodité * leanly.

* Venus.

ANTISTROPHE II.

In vain he sleeps; for in the fretful night
Shapes of fair seeming
Flit through his dreaming,
Soothing him sweetly,
Leaving him fleetly
Of bliss all barren. The shape fond fancy weaves him
His eager grasp would keep,
In vain; it cheats the hand; and leaves him, sweeping
Swift o'er the paths of sleep.
These sorrows pierce the Atridan chiefs,
And, worse than these, their private griefs,
But general Greece that to the fray
Sent her thousands, mourns to-day;
And Grief stout-hearted at each door
Sits to bear the burden sore
Of deathful news from the Trojan shore.
Ah! many an Argive heart to-day
Is pricked with wail and mourning,
Knowing how many went to Troy,
From Troy how few returning!
The mothers of each house shall wait
To greet their sons at every gate;
But, alas! not men, but dust of men
Each sorrowing house receiveth,
The urn in which the fleshly case
Its cindered ruin leaveth.

STROPHE III.

For Mars doth market bodies, and for gold
Gives dust, and in the battle of the bold
Holds the dread scales of Fate.
Burnt cinders, a light burden, but to friends
A heavy freight,
He sends from Troy; the beautiful vase he sends
With dust, for hearts, well lined, on which descends
The frequent tear.
And friends do wail their praise; this here
Expert to wield the pointed spear,
And this who cast his life away,
Nobly in ignoble fray,
For a strange woman's sake.
And in their silent hearts hate burns;

Against the kings
The moody-muttered grudge creeps forth,
And points its stings.
Others they mourn who 'neath Troy's wall
Entombed, dark sleep prolong,
Low pressed beneath the hostile sod,
The beautiful, the strong!

ANTISTROPHE III.

O hard to bear, when evil murmurs fly,
Is a nation's hate; unblest on whom doth lie
A people's curse!
My heart is dark, in my fear-procreant brain
Bad begets worse.
For not from heaven the gods behold in vain
Hands red with slaughter. The black-mantled train *
Who watch and wait,
In their own hour shall turn to bane
The bliss that grew from godless gain.
The mighty man with heart elate
Shall fall; even as the sightless shades,
The great man's glory fades.
Sweet to the ear is the popular cheer
Forth billowed loudly;
But the bolt from on high shall blast his eye [45]
That looketh proudly.
Be mine the sober bliss, and far
From fortune's high-strung rapture;
Not capturing others, may I never
See my own city's capture!

EPODE.

Swift-winged with thrilling note it came,
The blithe news from the courier-flame;
But whether true and witnessed well,
Or if some god hath forged a lie,
What tongue can tell?
Who is so young, so green of wit,
That his heart should blaze with a fever fit,
At a tale of this fire-courier's telling,
When a new rumour swiftly swelling,
May turn him back to dole? To lift the note
Of clamorous triumph ere the fight be fought,

* The Furies.

Is a light chance may fitly fall,
Where women wield the spear.[46]
A wandering word by woman's fond faith sped
Swells and increases,
But with dispersion swift a woman's tale
Is lost and ceases.

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA.

Soon shall we know if the light-bearing lamps
And the bright signals of the fiery changes
Spake true or, dream-like, have deceived our sense
With smiling semblance. For, behold, where comes,
Beneath the outspread olive's branchy shade,
A herald from the beach; and thirsty dust,
Twin-sister of the clay, attests his speed.
Not voiceless he, nor with the smoking flame
Of mountain pine will bring uncertain news.
His heraldry gives increase to our joy,
Or—but to speak ill-omened words I shun;—
May fair addition fair beginning follow!

Chorus. Whoso fears evil where no harm appears,
Reap first himself the fruit of his own fears.

Enter HERALD.

Hail Argive land! dear fatherland, all hail!
This tenth year's light doth shine on my return!
And now this one heart's hope from countless wrecks
I save! Scarce hoped I e'er to lay my bones
Within the tomb where dearest dust is stored.
I greet thee, native land! thee, shining sun!
Thee, the land's Sovereign, Jove! thee, Pythian King,
Shooting no more thy swift-winged shafts against us.
Enough on red Scamander's banks we knew
Thee hostile; now our saviour-god be thou,
Apollo, and our healer from much harm![47]
And you, all gods that guide the chance of fight,
I here invoke; and thee, my high protector,
Loved Hermes, of all heralds most revered.
And you, all heroes that sent forth our hosts,
Bring back, I pray, our remnant with good omens.
O kingly halls! O venerated seats!
O dear-loved roofs, and ye sun-fronting gods,[48]
If ever erst, now on this happy day,
With these bright-beaming eyes, duly receive

Your late returning king; for Agamemnon
Comes, like the sun, a common joy to all.
Greet him with triumph, as beseems the man,
Who with the mattock of justice-bringing Jove
Hath dug the roots of Troy, hath made its altars
Things seen no more, its towering temples razed,
And caused the seed of the whole land to perish.
Such yoke on Ilium's haughty neck the elder
Atridan threw, a king whom gods have blessed
And men revere, 'mongst mortals worthy most
Of honour; now nor Paris, nor in the bond
Partner'd with him, old Troy more crime may boast
Than penalty; duly in the court of fight,
In the just doom of rape and robbery damned,
His pledge is forfeited;[49] his hand hath reaped
Clean bare the harvest of all bliss from Troy.
Doubly they suffer for a double crime.

Chorus. Hail soldier herald, how farest thou?

Herald. Right well!
So well that I could bless the gods and die.

Chorus. Doubtless thy love of country tried thy heart?

Herald. To see these shores I weep for very joy.

Chorus. And that soul-sickness sweetly held thee?

Herald. How?
Instruct my wit to comprehend thy words.

Chorus. Smitten with love of them that much loved thee.

Herald. Say'st thou? loved Argos us as we loved Argos?

Chorus. Ofttimes we sorrowed from a sunless soul.

Herald. How so? Why should the thought of the host h
clouded
Thy soul with sadness?

Chorus. Sorrow not causeless came;
But I have learned to drug all woes by silence.

Herald. Whom should'st thou quail before, the chiefs away

Chorus. I could have used thy phrase, and wished to die.

Herald. Die now, an' thou wilt, for joy! The rolling years
Have given all things a prosperous end, though some
Were hard to bear; for who, not being a god,
Can hope to live long years of bliss unbroken?
A weary tale it were to tell the tithe
Of all our hardships; toils by day, by night,
Harsh harbourage, hard hammocks, and scant sleep.
No sun without new troubles, and new groans,

Shone on our voyage; and when at length we landed,
Our woes were doubled; 'neath the hostile walls,
On marshy meads night-sprinkled by the dews,
We slept, our clothes rotted with drenching rain,
And like wild beasts with shaggy-knotted hair.
Why should I tell bird-killing winter's sorrows,
Long months of suffering from Idéan snows,
Then summer's scorching heat, when noon beheld
The waveless sea beneath the windless air
In sleep diffused; these toils have run their hour.
The dead care not to rise; their roll our grief
Would muster o'er in vain; and we who live
Vainly shall fret at the cross strokes of fate.
Henceforth to each harsh memory of the past
Farewell! we who survive this long-drawn war
Have gains to count that far outweigh the loss.
Well may we boast in the face of the shining sun,
O'er land and sea our winged tidings wafting,
THE ACHÆAN HOST HATH CAPTURED TROY; and now
On the high temples of the gods we hang
These spoils, a shining grace, there to remain
An heritage for ever.[50] These things to hear
Shall men rejoice, and with fair praises laud
The state and its great generals, laud the grace
Of Jove the Consummator. I have said.

Chorus. I own thy speech the conqueror; for a man
Can never be too old to learn good news,
And though thy words touch Clytemnestra most,
Joy to the Atridan's halls is wealth to me.

Clytem. I lifted first the shout of jubilee,
Then when the midnight sign of the courier fire
Told the deep downfall of the captured Troy;
But one then mocked my faith, that I believed
The fire-sped message in so true a tale.
'Tis a light thing to buoy a woman's heart
With hopeful news, they cried; and with these words
They wildered my weak wit. And yet I sped
The sacrifice, and raised the welcoming shout
In woman's wise, and at a woman's word
Forthwith from street to street uprose to the gods
Well-omened salutations, and glad hymns,
Lulling the fragrant incense-feeding flame.
What needs there more? The event has proved me right,

Himself—my lord—with his own lips shall speak
The weighty tale; myself will go make ready
With well-earned honour to receive the honoured.
What brighter bliss on woman's lot may beam,
Than when a god gives back her spouse from war,
To ope the gates of welcome. Tell my husband,
To his loved home, desired of all, to haste.
A faithful wife, even as he left her, here
He'll find expectant, like a watch-dog, gentle
To him and his, to all that hate him harsh.
The seals that knew his stamp, when hence he sailed,
Unharmed remain, untouched: and for myself
Nor praise nor blame from other man I know,
No more than dyer's art can tincture brass.[51]

Herald. A boast like this, instinct with very truth,
Comes from a noble lady without blame.

Chorus. Wise words she spake, and words that need no comm
To ears that understand. But say, good Herald,
Comes Menelaus safe back from the wars,
His kindly sway in Argos to resume?

Herald. I cannot gloss a lie with fair pretence;
The best told lie bears but a short-lived fruit.

Chorus. Speak the truth plainly, if thou canst not pleasantly
These twain be seldom wedded; and here, alas!
They stand out sundered with too clear a mark.

Herald. The man is vanished from the Achæan host,
He and his vessel. Thou hast heard the truth.

Chorus. Sailed he from Ilium separate from the fleet?
Or did the tempest part him from his friends!

Herald. Like a good marksman thou hast hit the mark,
In one short sentence summing many sorrows.

Chorus. Alive is he or dead? What word hath reached you
What wandering rumour from sea-faring men?

Herald. This none can tell, save yon bright sun aloft,
That cherishes all things with his friendly light.

Chorus. How came the storm on the fleet? or how was end
The wrath of the gods?

Herald. Not well it suits to blot
With black rehearsal this auspicious day.
Far from the honors of the blissful gods[52]
Be grief's recital. When with gloomy visage
An ugly tale the herald's voice unfolds,
At once a general wound, and private grief,

An army lost, the sons of countless houses
Death-doomed by the double scourge so dear to Ares,*
A twin-speared harm, a yoke of crimson slaughter:
A herald saddled with such woes may sing
A pæan to the Erinnyes. But I,
Who to this city blithe and prosperous
Brought the fair news of Agamemnon's safety,
How shall I mingle bad with good, rehearsing
The wintry wrath sent by the gods to whelm us?
Fire and the sea, sworn enemies of old,[53]
Made friendly league to sweep the Achæan host
With swift destruction pitiless. Forth rushed
The tyrannous Thracian blasts, and wave chased wave,
Fierce 'neath the starless night, and ship on ship
Struck clashing; beak on butting beak was driven;
The puffing blast, the beat of boiling billows,
The whirling gulph (an evil pilot) wrapt them
In sightless death. And when the shining sun
Shone forth again, we see the Ægean tide
Strewn with the purple blossoms of the dead,
And wrecks of shattered ships. Us and our bark
Some god, no man, the storm-tost hull directing,
Hath rescued scathless, stealing us from the fray,
Or with a prayer begging our life from Fate.
Kind Fortune helmed us further, safely kept
From yeasty ferment in the billowy bay,
Nor dashed on far-ledged rocks. Thus having 'scaped
That ocean hell,[54] scarce trusting our fair fortune,
We hailed the lucid day; but could we hope,
The chance that saved ourselves had saved our friends?
Our fearful hearts with thoughts of them we fed,
Far-labouring o'er the loosely-driving main.[55]
And doubtless they, if yet live breath they breathe,
Deem so of us, as we must fear of them,
That they have perished. But I hope the best.
And first and chief expect ye the return
Of Menelaus. If the sun's blest ray
Yet looks on him, where he beholds the day
By Jove's devising,[56] not yet willing wholly
To uproot the race of Atreus, hope may be
He yet returns. Thou hast my tale; and I
Have told the truth untinctured with a lie. [*Exit.*

* Mars.

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

Who gave her a name
So true to her fame?
Does a Providence rule in the fate of a word?
Sways there in heaven a viewless power
O'er the chance of the tongue in the naming hour?
Who gave her a name,
This daughter of strife, this daughter of shame,
The spear-wooed maid of Greece?
Helen the taker![57] 'tis plain to see
A taker of ships, a taker of men,
A taker of cities is she.
From the soft-curtained chamber of Hymen she fled,
By the breath of giant[58] Zephyr sped,
And shield-bearing throngs in marshalled array
Hounded her flight o'er the printless way,
Where the swift-plashing oar
The fair booty bore
To swirling Simois' leafy shore,
And stirred the crimson fray.

ANTISTROPHE I.

For the gods sent a bride,
Kin but not kind,[59]
Ripe with the counsel of wrath to Troy,
In the fulness of years, the offender to prove,
And assert the justice of Jove;
For great Jove is lord
Of the rights of the hearth and the festal board.
The sons of Priam sang
A song to the praise of the bride:
From jubilant throats they praised her then,
The bride from Hellas brought;
But now the ancient city hath changed
Her hymn to a doleful note.
She weeps bitter tears; she curses the head
Of the woe-wedded Paris; she curses the bed
Of the beautiful bride
That crossed the flood,
And filched the life of her sons, and washed
Her wide-paved streets with blood.

STROPHE II.

Whoso nurseth the cub of a lion
Weaned from the dugs of its dam, where the draught
Of its mountain-milk was free,
Finds it gentle at first and tame.
It frisks with the children in innocent game,
And the old man smiles to see;
It is dandled about like a babe in the arm,
It licketh the hand that fears no harm,
And when hunger pinches its fretful maw,
It fawns with an eager glee.

ANTISTROPHE II.

But it grows with the years; and soon reveals
The fount of fierceness whence it came:
And, loathing the food of the tame,
It roams abroad, and feasts in the fold,
On feasts forbidden, and stains the floor
Of the house that nursed it with gore.
A curse they nursed for their own undoing,
A mouth by which their own friends shall perish;
A servant of Até, a priest of Ruin,[60]
Some god hath taught them to cherish.

STROPHE III.

Thus to Troy came a bride of the Spartan race,
With a beauty as bland as a windless calm,
Prosperity's gentlest grace;
And mild was love's blossom that rayed from her eye,
The soft-winged dart that with pleasing pain
Thrills heart and brain.
But anon she changed: herself fulfilled
Her wedlock's bitter end;
A fatal sister, a fatal bride,
Her fateful head she rears;
Herself the Erinnys from Jove to avenge
The right of the injured host, and change
The bridal joy to tears.

ANTISTROPHE III.

'Twas said of old, and 'tis said to-day,
That wealth to prosperous stature grown
Begets a birth of its own:
That a surfeit of evil by good is prepared,

And sons must bear what allotment of woe
Their sires were spared.
But this I rebel to believe: I know
That impious deeds conspire
To beget an offspring of impious deeds
Too like their ugly sire.
But whoso is just, though his wealth like a river
Flow down, shall be scathless: his house shall rejoice
In an offspring of beauty for ever.

STROPHE IV.

The heart of the haughty delights to beget
A haughty heart.[61] From time to time
In children's children recurrent appears
The ancestral crime.
When the dark hour comes that the gods have decreed,
And the Fury burns with wrathful fires,
A demon unholy, with ire unabated,
Lies like black night on the halls of the fated:
And the recreant son plunges guiltily on
To perfect the guilt of his sires.

ANTISTROPHE IV.

But Justice shines in a lowly cell;
In the homes of poverty, smoke-begrimed,
With the sober-minded she loves to dwell.
But she turns aside
From the rich man's house with averted eye,
The golden-fretted halls of pride
Where hands with lucre are foul, and the praise
Of counterfeit goodness smoothly sways:
And wisely she guides in the strong man's despite
All things to an issue of RIGHT.

Chorus. But, hail the king! the city-taking
Seed of Atreus' race.
How shall I accost thee! How
With beseeming reverence greet thee?
Nor above the mark, nor sinking
Beneath the line of grace?
Many of mortal men there be,
'Gainst the rule of right preferring
Seeming to substance; tears are free
In the eye when woe its tale rehearseth,
But the sting of sorrow pierceth

No man's liver; many force
Lack-laughter faces to relax
Into the soft lines traced by joy.
But the shepherd true and wise
Knows the faithless man, whose eyes,
With a forward friendship twinkling,
Fawn with watery love.[62]
For me, I nothing hide. O King,
In my fancy's picturing,
From the Muses far I deemed thee,
And thy soul not wisely helming
When thou drew'st the knife
For Helen's sake, a woman, whelming
Thousands in ruin, rushing rashly
On unwelcome strife.
But now all's well. No shallow smiles
We wear for thee, thy weary toils
All finished. Thou shalt know anon
What friends do serve thee truly,
And who in thy long absence used
Their stewardship unduly.

Enter AGAMEMNON *with attendants;* CASSANDRA *behind.*

Aga. First Argos hail! and ye, my country's gods,
Who worked my safe return, and nerved my arm
With vengeance against Priam! for the gods,
Taught by no glozing tongue, but by the sight
Of their own eyes knew justice; voting ruin
And men-destroying death to ancient Troy,
Their fatal pebbles in the bloody urn
Not doubtingly they dropt; the other vase,
Unfed with hope of suffrage-bearing hand,
Stood empty. Now the captured city's smoke
Points where it fell. Raves Ruin's storm; the winds
With crumbled dust and dissipated gold
Float grossly laden. To the immortal gods
These thanks, fraught with rich memory of much good,
We pay; they taught our hands to spread the net
With anger-whetted wit; a woman's frailty
Laid bare old Ilium to the Argive bite,
And with the setting Pleiads outleapt a birth
Of strong shield-bearers from the fateful horse.
A fierce flesh-tearing lion leapt their walls,

And licked a surfeit of tyrannic blood.
This prelude to the gods. As for thy words
Of friendly welcome, I return thy greeting,
And as your thought, so mine; for few are gifted
With such rich store of love, to see a friend
Preferred and feel no envy; 'tis a disease
Possessing mortal men, a poison lodged
Close by the heart, eating all joy away
With double barb—his own mischance who suffers
And bliss of others sitting at his gate,
Which when he sees he groans. I know it well;
They who seemed most my friends, and many seemed,
Were but the mirrored show, the shadowy ghost
Of something like to friendship, substanceless.
Ulysses only, most averse to sail,
Was still most ready in the yoke with me
To bear the harness; living now or dead,
This praise I frankly give him. For the rest,
The city and the gods, we will take counsel
In full assembly freely. What is good
We will give heed that it be lasting; where
Disease the cutting or the caustic cure
Demands, we will apply it. I, meanwhile,
My hearth and home salute, and greet the gods,
Who, as they sent me to the distant fray,
Have brought me safely back. Fair victory,
Once mine, may she dwell with me evermore!

Clytem. Men! Citizens! ye reverend Argive seniors,
No shame feel I, even in your face, to tell
My husband-loving ways. Long converse lends
Boldness to bashfulness. No foreign griefs,
Mine own self-suffered woes I tell. While he
Was camping far at Ilium, I at home
Sat all forlorn, uncherished by the mate
Whom I had chosen; this was woe enough
Without enforcement; but, to try me further,
A host of jarring rumours stormed my doors,
Each fresh recital with a murkier hue
Than its precedent; and I must hear all.
If this my lord, had borne as many wounds
In battle as the bloody fame recounted,
He had been pierced throughout even as a net;
And had he died as oft as Rumour slew him,

He might have boasted of a triple coil [63]
Like the three-bodied Geryon, while on earth
(Of him below I speak not), and like him
Been three times heaped with a cloak of funeral dust.
Thus fretted by cross-grained reports, oft-times
The knotted rope high-swung had held my neck,
But that my friends with forceful aid prevented.
Add that my son, pledge of our mutual vows,
Orestes is not here; nor think it strange.
Thy Phocian spear-guest,[64] the most trusty Strophius,
Took him in charge, a twofold danger urging
First thine beneath the walls of Troy, and further
The evil likelihood that, should the Greeks
Be worsted in the strife, at home the voice
Of many-babbling anarchy might cast
The council down, and as man's baseness is,
At fallen greatness insolently spurn.
Moved by these thoughts I parted with my boy,
And for no other cause. Myself the while
So woe-worn lived, the fountains of my grief
To their last drop were with much weeping drained;
And far into the night my watch I've kept
With weary eyes, while in my lonely room
The night-torch faintly glimmered. In my dream
The buzzing gnat, with its light-brushing wing,
Startled the fretful sleeper; thou hast been
In waking hours, as in sleep's fitful turns
My only thought. But having bravely borne
This weight of woe, now with blithe heart I greet
Thee, my heart's lord, the watch-dog of the fold,
The ship's sure mainstay, pillared shaft whereon
Rests the high roof, fond parent's only child,
Land seen by sailors past all hope, a day
Lovely to look on when the storm hath broken,
And to the thirsty wayfarer the flow
Of gushing rill. O sweet it is, how sweet
To see an end of the harsh yoke that galled us!
These greetings to my lord; nor grudge me, friends,
This breadth of welcome; sorrows we have known
Ample enough. And now, thou precious head,
Come from thy car; nay, do not set thy foot,
The foot that trampled Troy, on common clay.
What ho! ye laggard maids! why lags your task

Behind the hour? Spread purple where he treads.
Fitly the broidered foot-cloth marks his path,
Whom Justice leadeth to his long-lost home
With unexpected train. What else remains
Our sleepless zeal, with favour of the gods,
Shall order as befits.

Aga. Daughter of Leda, guardian of my house!
Almost thou seem'st to have spun thy welcome out
To match my lengthened absence; but I pray thee
Praise with discretion, and let other mouths
Proclaim my pæans. For the rest, abstain
From delicate tendance that would turn my manhood
To woman's temper. Not in barbaric wise
With prostrate reverence base, kissing the ground,
Mouth sounding salutations; not with purple,
Breeder of envy, spread my path. Such honors
Suit the immortal gods; me, being mortal,
To tread on rich-flowered carpetings wise fear
Prohibits. As a man, not as a god,
Let me be honored. Not the less my fame
Shall be far blazoned, that on common earth
I tread untapestried. A sober heart
Is the best gift of God; call no man happy
Till death hath found him prosperous to the close.
For me, if what awaits me fall not worse
Than what hath fallen, I have good cause to look
Bravely on fate.

Clytem. Nay, but my good lord will not
In this gainsay my heart's most warm desire.

Aga. My wish and will thou shalt not lightly mar.

Clytem. Hast thou a vow belike, and fear'st the gods?

Aga. If e'er man knew, I know my will in this.

Clytem. Had Priam conquered, what had Priam done?

Aga. His feet had trod the purple; doubt it not.

Clytem. What Priam would, thou may'st, unless the fear
Of popular blame make Agamemnon quail.

Aga. But popular babble strengthens Envy's wing.

Clytem. Thou must be envied if thou wilt be great.

Aga. Is it a woman's part to hatch contention?

Clytem. For once be conquered; they who conquer may
Yield with a grace.

Aga. And thou in this vain strife
Must be perforce the conqueror; is it so?

Clytem. 'Tis even so: for once give me the reins.
Aga. Thou hast thy will. Come, boy, unbind these sandals,[65]
That are the prostrate subjects to my feet,
When I do tread; for with shod feet I never
May leave my print on the sea-purple, lest
Some god with jealous eye look from afar
And mark me. Much I fear with insolent foot
To trample wealth, and rudely soil the web
Whose precious threads the pure-veined silver buys.
So much for this. As for this maid, receive
The stranger kindly: the far-seeing gods
Look down with love on him who mildly sways.
For never yet was yoke of slavery borne
By willing neck; of all the captive maids
The choicest flower she to my portion fell.
And now, since thou art victor o'er my will,
I tread the purple to my father's hall.
Clytem. The wide sea flows; and who shall dry it up?
The ocean flows, and in its vasty depths
Is brewed the purple's die, as silver precious,
A tincture ever-fresh for countless robes.
But Agamemnon's house is not a beggar;
With this, and with much more the gods provide us;
And purple I had vowed enough to spread
The path of many triumphs, had a god
Given me such 'hest oracular to buy
The ransom of thy life. We have thee now,
Both root and trunk, a tree rich leafage spreading
To shade this mansion from the Sirian dog.
Welcome, thou double blessing! to this hearth
That bringest heat against keen winter's cold,
And coolness when the sweltering Jove prepares
Wine from the crudeness of the bitter grape;
Enter the house, made perfect by thy presence.
Jove, Jove, the perfecter! perfect thou my vow,[66]
And thine own counsels quickly perfect thou! [*Exeunt.*

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

Whence these shapes of fear that haunt me?
These hovering portents why?
Is my heart a seer inspired,
To chaunt unbidden and unhired[67]

Notes of dark prophecy?
Blithe confidence, my bosom's lord,*
That swayed the doubtful theme,
Arise, and with thy clear command
Chase the vain-vexing dream!
Long years have rolled; and still I fear,
As when the Argive band
Unloosed their cables from the shore,[68]
And eager plied the frequent oar
To the far Ilian strand.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Now they return: my vouching eyes
To prop my faith conspire,
And yet my heart, in self-taught hymns,
As with a Fury's burden brims,
And will not own the lyre.
I fear, I fear: the bold-faced Hope
Hath left my heart all drear;
And my thought, not idly tossed within,
Feels evil creeping near.
For the heart hath scent of things to come,
And prophesies by fear;
And yet I pray, may all conspire
To prove my boding heart a liar,
And me a foolish seer.

STROPHE II.

Full-blooded health, that in the veins
With lusty pulses hotly wells,
Shall soon have check. Disease beside it
Wall to wall, ill-sundered, dwells.
The proud trireme, with sudden shock,
In its mid career, on a sunken rock
Strikes, and all is lost.
Yet there is hope; the ship may rein
Its plunge, from whelming ruin free,
If with wise sling the merchant fling
Into the greedy sea
A part to save the whole. And thus
Jove, that two-handed stores for us,
In our mid woe may pause,

* "My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne."
SHAKESPEARE, quoted by Symmons.

Heap gifts on gifts from yearly furrows,
And save the house from swamping sorrows,
And lean starvation's jaws.

ANTISTROPHE II.

But, oh! when black blood stains the ground,
And the mortal mortal lies,
Shall the dead hear when thou chauntest?
To thy charming shall he rise?
Once there was a leech so wise
Could raise the dead,* but, from the skies,
Struck by Jove, he ceased.
But cease my song. Were link with link
In the chain of things not bound together[69]
That each event must wait its time,
Nor one dare trip the other,
My tongue had played the prophet's part,
And rolled the burden from my heart;
But now, to doubt resigned,
With smothered fears, all dumb I wait
The unravelling hour; while sparks of fate
Flit through my darksome mind.

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA.

Clytem. Come thou, too, in; this maid, I mean; Cassandra!
For not in wrath Jove sent thee here to share
Our family lustrations, and to stand,
With many slaves, beside the household altar.[70]
Step from this car, nor bear thy spirit proudly
Above thy fate, for even Alcmena's son,
To slavery sold, once bore the hated yoke.
What must be, must be; rather thank the chance
That gave thee to an old and wealthy house;
For they who reap an unexpected growth
Of wealth, are harsh to slaves beyond the line
Of a well-tempered rule. Here thou shalt find
The common use of bondage.

Chorus. Plainly she speaks;
And thou within Fate's iron toils once caught
Wert wise to go—if go thou wilt—but, soothly,
Thou hast no willing look.

Clytem. Nay! an' she be not
Barbarian to the bone, and speaking nought

* Æsculapius.

Save swallow jabber,* she shall hear my voice.
I'll pierce her marrow with it.

Chorus. Captive maid,
Obey! thou shouldst; 'tis best; be thou persuaded
To leave thy chariot-seat and follow her.

Clytem. No time have I to stand without the gate
Prating with her. Within, on the central hearth,
The fire burns bright, the sheep's fat slaughter waiting,
To furnish forth a banquet that transcends
The topmost of our hopes. Wilt thou obey,
Obey me quickly! If with stubborn sense
Thou hast nor ear to hear, nor voice to speak,
Answer my sign with thy barbarian hand.

Chorus. A wise interpreter the maid demands;
Like a wild beast new caught, even so she stands.

Clytem. Ay! she is mad; her wit to sober counsels
Is deaf; she comes from the new-captured city,
Untaught to bear the Argive bit with patience,
But foams and dashes bloody froth. I will not
Make myself base by wasting words on her. [*Exit*

Chorus. Poor maid, I may not blame; I pity thee.
Come, leave thy seat; for, though the yoke be strange,
Necessity compels, and thou must bear it.

STROPHE I.

Cass. Ah! ah! woes me! woe! woe!
Apollo! O Apollo!

Chorus. Why dost thou wail to Loxias?† is he
A gloomy god that he should list sad tales?

ANTISTROPHE I.

Cass. Ah! ah! woes me! woe! woe!
Apollo! O Apollo!

Chorus. Again with evil-omened voice she cries
Upon the god least fit to wait on woe.

STROPHE II.

Cass. Apollo! Apollo!
My way-god, my leader Apollo![71]
Apollo the destroyer!
Thou with light labour hast destroyed me quite.

* *Swallow jabber.*—"Barbarians are called swallows because their speech cannot be understood any more than the twitter of swallows."—*Stanley, from Hesychius.*

† An epithet of Apollo, from λοξὸς oblique, for which Macrobius (Sat. I. 17) gives astronomical reasons; but it seems more obvious to say that the god is so called from the obliqueness or obscurity of his oracles.

Chorus. Strange oracles against herself she speaks;
Ev'n in the bondsman's bosom dwells the god.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Cass. Apollo! Apollo!
Apollo, my leader, whither hast thou led me?[72]
My way-god, Apollo?
What homes receive thy captive prophetess?
Chorus. The Atridæ's homes. This, an' thou knowst it not,
I tell thee; and the words I speak are true.

STROPHE III.

Cass. Ha! the house of the Atridæ!*
Well the godless house I know,
With the dagger and the rope,
And the self-inflicted blow!
Where red blood is on the floor,
And black murder at the door—
This house—this house I know.
Chorus. She scents out slaughter, mark me, like a hound,
And tracks the spot where she shall feast on blood.

ANTISTROPHE III.

Cass. Ay! I scent a truthful scent,
And the thing I say I know.
See! see! these weeping children,
How they vouch the monstrous woe!
Their red wounds are bleeding fresh,
And their father eats their flesh,
This bloody house I know.
Chorus. The fame of thy divinings far renowned
Have reached us, but we wish no prophets here.

STROPHE IV.

Cass. Ha! ha! what plots she now!
A new sorrow, a new snare
To the house of the Atridæ,
And a burden none may bear!
A black harm to all and each,
A disease that none may leech,
And the evil plot to mar
All help and hope is far.

* From the looseness of the laws of quantity in English versification, it may be as well to state here that I wish these lines of seven syllables to be read as ∪ ∪ —́, ∪ —́, ∪ —́. not —́ ∪, —́ ∪, —́ ∪, —́.

Chorus. Nay now I'm lost and mazed in vain surmise.
What first she said I knew—the common rumour.

ANTISTROPHE IV.

Cass. Ha! woman wilt thou dare?
Thy bed's partner and thy mate
In the warm refreshing bath
Shall he find his bloody fate?
How shall I dare to say
What comes and will not stay?
See, to do her heart's command
Where she stretches her red hand!

Chorus. Not yet I understand: through riddles dark
And cloudy oracles my wits are wandering.

STROPHE V.

Cass. Ha! what bloody sight is this!
'Tis a net of Hades spread—
'Tis a snare to snare her lord,
The fond sharer of her bed.
The black chorus of the place*
Shout for vengeance o'er the race,
Whose offence cries for atoning,
With a heavy death of stoning!

STROPHE VI.

Chorus. What black Fury of the place
Shall shout vengeance o'er the race?
Such strange words I hate to hear.
The blithe blood, that crimson ran[73]
In my veins, runs pale and wan
With the taint of yellow fear,
As when in the mortal anguish,[74]
Life's last fitful glimpses languish
And Fate, as now, is near!

ANTISTROPHE V.

Cass. Ha! ha! the work proceeds!
From the bull keep back the cow!
Lo! now she seizes him
By the strong black horn,[75] and now
She hath wrapt him round with slaughter;
She strikes! and in the water
Of the bath he falls. Mark well,
In the bath doth murder dwell.

* The Furies.

ANTISTROPHE VI.

Chorus. No prophetic gift is mine
The dark saying to divine,
But this sounds like evil quite;
For to mortal man was never
The diviner's voice the giver
Of a message of delight,
But in words of mazy mourning,
Comes the prophet's voice of warning,
With a lesson of affright.

STROPHE VII.

Cass. Fill the cup, and brim the woe!
'Tis my own heart's blood must flow
Me! miserable me!
From old Troy why didst thou bring me
Poor captive maid, to sing thee
Thy dirge, and die with thee?

STROPHE VIII.

Chorus. By a god thou art possessed,
And he raveth in thy breast,
And he sings a song of thee
That hath music, but no glee.
Like a dun-plumed nightingale,*
That, with never-sated wail,
Crieth Itys! Itys! aye,[76]
As it scatters, in sweet flow,
The thick blossoms of its woe,[77]
So singest thou to-day.

ANTISTROPHE VII.

Cass. Ah! the clear-toned nightingale!
Mellow bird, thou dost not wail,†
For the good gods gave to thee
A light shape of fleetest winging,
A bright life of sweetest singing,
But a sharp-edged death to me.

* Dun-plumed. ξουθὰ. "Because the poor brown bird, alas
Sings in the garden sweet and true."
MISS BARRETT

† "Most musical, most melancholy bird!"
A melancholy bird? O idle thought!
In Nature there is nothing melancholy.
COLERIDGE

ANTISTROPHE VIII.

Chorus. By a god thou art possessed,
And he goads thee without rest,
And he racks thy throbbing brain
With a busy-beating pain,
And he presses from thy throat
The heavy struggling note,
And the cry that rends the air.
Who bade her tread this path,
With the prophecy of wrath,
And the burden of despair?

STROPHE IX.

Cass. O the wedlock and the woe
Of the evil Alexander,
To his chiefest friends a foe!
O my native stream Scamander,
Where in youth I wont to wander,
And was nursed for future woes,
Where thy swirling current flows!
But now on sluggish shore
Of Cocytus I shall pour,
'Mid the Acherusian glades,
My divinings to the shades.

STROPHE X.

Chorus. Nothing doubtful is the token;
For the words the maid hath spoken
To a very child are clear.
She hath pierced me to the marrow;
And her cry of shrieking sorrow
Ah! it crushes me to hear.

ANTISTROPHE IX.

Cass. The proud city lieth lowly,
Nevermore to rise again!
It is lost and ruined wholly;
And before the walls in vain
Hath my pious father slain
Many meadow-cropping kine,
To appease the wrath divine.
Where it lieth it shall lie,
Ancient Ilium: and I

On the ground, when all is past,
Soon my reeking heart shall cast.[78]

ANTISTROPHE X.

Chorus. Ah! the mighty god, wrath-laden,
He hath smote the burdened maiden
With a weighty doom severe.
From her heart sharp cries he wringeth,
Dismal, deathful strains she singeth,
And I wait the end in fear.

Cass. No more my prophecy, like a young bride
Shall from a veil peep forth, but like a wind
Waves shall it dash from the west in the sun's face,[79]
And curl high-crested surges of fierce woes,
That far outbillow mine. I'll speak no more
In dark enigmas. Ye my vouchers be,
While with keen scent I snuff the breath of the past,
And point the track of monstrous crimes of eld.
There is a choir, to destiny well-tuned,
Haunts these doomed halls, no mellow-throated choir,
And they of human blood have largely drunk:
And by that wine made bold, the Bacchanals
Cling to their place of revels. The sister'd Furies
Sit on these roofs, and hymn the prime offence
Of this crime-burthened race; the brother's sin
That trod the brother's bed.* Speak! do I hit
The mark, a marksman true? or do I beat
Your doors, a babbling beggar prophesying
False dooms for hire? Be ye my witnesses,
And with an oath avouch, how well I know
The hoary sins that hang upon these walls.

Chorus. Would oaths make whole our ills, though I should wedge them
As stark as ice?[80] But I do marvel much
That thou, a stranger born, from distant seas,
Dost know our city as it were thine own.

Cass. Even this to know, Apollo stirred my breast.

Chorus. Apollo! didst thou strike the god with love?

Cass. Till now I was ashamed to hint the tale.

Chorus. The dainty lips of nice prosperity
Misfortune opens.

Cass. Like a wrestler he
Strove for my love; he breathed his grace upon me.

* See Introductory Remarks.

Chorus. And hast thou children from divine embrace?
Cass. I gave the word to Loxias, not the deed.
Chorus. Hadst thou before received the gift divine?
Cass. I had foretold my countrymen all their woes.
Chorus. Did not the anger of the god pursue thee?
Cass. It did; I warned, but none believed my warning.
Chorus. To us thou seem'st to utter things that look
Only too like the truth.
Cass. Ah me! woe! woe!
Again strong divination's troublous whirl
Seizes my soul, and stirs my labouring breast
With presages of doom. Lo! where they sit,
These pitiful young ones on the fated roof,
Like to the shapes of dreams! The innocent babes,
Butchered by friends that should have blessed them, and
In their own hands their proper bowels they bear,
Banquet abhorred, and their own father eats it.*
This deed a lion, not a lion-hearted
Shall punish; wantonly in her bed, whose lord
Shall pay the heavy forfeit, he shall roll,
And snare my master—woe's me, even *my* master,
For slavery's yoke my neck must learn to own.
Ah! little weens the leader of the ships,
Troy's leveller, how a hateful bitch's tongue,
With long-drawn phrase, and broad-sown smile, doth weave
His secret ruin. This a woman dares;
The female mars the male. Where shall I find
A name to name such monster? dragon dire,
Rock-lurking Scylla, the vexed seaman's harm,
Mother of Hades, murder's Mænad, breathing
Implacable breath of curses on her kin.[81]
All-daring woman! shouting in her heart,
As o'er the foe, when backward rolls the fight,
Yet hymning kindliest welcome with her tongue.
Ye look mistrustful; I am used to that.
That comes which is to come; and ye shall know
Full soon, with piteous witness in your eyes,
How true, and very true, Cassandra spake.
Chorus. Thyestes' banquet, and his children's flesh
I know, and shudder; strange that she should know
The horrors of that tale; but for the rest
She runs beyond my following.
Cass. Thus I said;

* The banquet of his own children, which Atreus offered to Thyestes.—See Introductory Remarks.

Thine eyes shall witness Agamemnon's death.
Chorus. Hush, wretched maiden! lull thy tongue to rest,
And cease from evil-boding words!
Cass. Alas!
The gods that heal all evil, heal not this.
Chorus. If it must be; but may the gods forefend!
Cass. Pray thou, and they will have more time to kill.
Chorus. What man will dare to do such bloody deed?
Cass. I spake not of a *man:* thy thoughts shoot wide.
Chorus. The deed I heard, but not whose hand should do it.
Cass. And yet I spake good Greek with a good Greek tongue.
Chorus. Thou speakest Apollo's words: true, but obscure.
Cass. Ah me! the god! like fire within my breast
Burns the Lycéan god.* Ah me! pain! pain!
A lioness two-footed with a wolf
Is bedded, when the noble lion roamed
Far from his den; and she will murder me.
She crowns the cup of wrath; she whets the knife
Against the neck of the man, and he must pay
The price of capture, I of being captive.
Vain gauds, that do but mock my grief, farewell!
This laurel-rod, and this diviner's wreath
About my neck, should they outlive the wearer?
Away! As ye have paid me, I repay.
Make rich some other prophetess with woe!
Lo! where Apollo looks, and sees me now
Doff this diviner's garb, the self-same weeds
He tricked me erst withal, to live for him,
The public scorn, the scoff of friends and foes,
The mark of every ribald jester's tongue,
The homeless girl, the raving mountebank,
The beggar'd, wretched, starving maniac.
And now who made the prophetess unmakes her,
And leads me to my doom—ah! not beside
My father's altar doomed to die! the block
From my hot life shall drink the purple stain.
But we shall fall not unavenged: the gods
A mother-murdering shoot shall send from far
To avenge his sire; the wanderer shall return
To pile the cope-stone on these towering woes.
The gods in heaven a mighty oath have sworn,
To raise anew the father's prostrate fate
By the son's arm.—But why stand here, and beat

* Apollo.

The air with cries, seeing what I have seen;
When Troy hath fallen, suffering what it suffered,
And they who took the city by the doom
Of righteous gods faring as they shall fare?
I will endure to die, and greet these gates
Of Hades gaping for me. Grant me, ye gods,
A mortal stroke well-aimed, and a light fall
From cramped convulsion free! Let the red blood
Flow smoothly from its fount, that I may close
These eyes in peaceful death.

Chorus. O hapless maid!
And wise as hapless! thou hast spoken long!
But if thou see'st the harm, why rush on fate
Even as an ox, whom favouring gods inspire
To stand by the altar's steps, and woo the knife.

Cass. I'm in the net. Time will not break the meshes.

Chorus. But the last moment of sweet life is honoured.

Cass. My hour is come; what should I gain by flight?

Chorus. Thou with a stout heart bravely look'st on fate.

Cass. Bravely thou praisest: but the happy hear not
Such commendations.[82]

Chorus. Yet if death must come,
His fame is fair who nobly fronts the foe.

Cass. Woe's me, the father and his noble children!

Chorus. Whither now? What father and what children? Speak!

Cass. [*Approaching and starting back from the house.*]
Woe! woe!

Chorus. What means this woe? What horrid fancy scares thee?

Cass. Blood-dripping murder reeks from yonder house.

Chorus. How? 'Tis the scent of festal sacrifice.

Cass. The scent of death—a fragrance from the grave.

Chorus. Soothly no breath of Syrian nard she names.

Cass. But now the time is come. I go within
To wail for Agamemnon and myself.
I've done with life. Farewell! My vouchers ye,
Not with vain screaming, like a fluttering bird,[83]
Above the bush I cry. Yourselves shall know it
Then when, for me a woman, a woman dies,
And for a man ill-wived a man shall fall.
Trust me in this. Your honest faith is all
The Trojan guest, the dying woman, craves.

Chorus. O wretched maid! O luckless prophetess

Cass. Yet will I speak one other word, before

I leave this light. Hear thou my vows, bright sun,
And, though a slave's death be a little thing,
Send thou the avenging hand with full requital,
To pay my murderers back, as they have paid.
Alas! the fates of men! their brightest bloom
A shadow blights; and, in their evil day,
An oozy sponge blots out their fleeting prints,
And they are seen no more. From bad to worse
Our changes run, and with the worst we end.[84] [*Exit.*

Chorus. Men crave increase of riches ever
With insatiate craving. Never
From the finger-pointed halls
Of envied wealth their owner calls,
"Enter no more! I have enough!"
This man the gods with honour crowned;
He hath levelled with the ground
Priam's city, and in triumph
Glorious home returns;
But if doomed the fine to pay
Of ancient guilt, and death with death
To guerdon in the end,
Who of mortals will not pray,[85]
From high-perched Fortune's favour far,
A blameless life to spend.

Aga. [*From within.*] O I am struck! struck with a mortal blow!

Chorus. Hush! what painful voice is speaking there of strokes and mortal blows?

Aga. O struck again! struck with a mortal blow!

Chorus. 'Tis the king that groans; the work, the bloody work, I fear, is doing.
Weave we counsel now together, and concert a sure design.[86]

1st Chorus. I give my voice to lift the loud alarm,
And rouse the city to besiege the doors.

2nd Chorus. Rather forthwith go in ourselves, and prove
The murderer with the freshly-dripping blade.

3rd Chorus. I add my pebble to thine. It is not well
That we delay. Fate hangs upon the moment.

4th Chorus. The event is plain, with this prelusive blood
They hang out signs of tyranny to Argos.

5th Chorus. Then why stay we? Procrastination they
Tramp underfoot; they sleep not with their hands.

6th Chorus. Not so. When all is dark, shall we unwisely
Rush blindfold on an unconsulted deed?

7th Chorus. Thou speakest well. If he indeed be dead,
Our words are vain to bring him back from Hades.
8th Chorus. Shall we submit to drag a weary life
Beneath the shameless tyrants of this house?
9th Chorus. Unbearable! and better far to die!
Death is a gentler lord than tyranny.
10th Chorus. First ask we this, if to have heard a groan
Gives a sure augury that the man is dead.
11th Chorus. Wisdom requires to probe the matter well:
To guess is one thing, and to know another.
12th Chorus. So wisely spoken.[87] With full-voiced assent
Inquire we first how Agamemnon fares.

[*The scene opens from behind, and discovers* CLYTEMNESTR
standing over the dead bodies of AGAMEMNON a
CASSANDRA.]

Clytem. I spoke to you before; and what I spoke
Suited the time; nor shames me now to speak
Mine own refutal. For how shall we entrap
Our foe, our seeming friend, in scapeless ruin,
Save that we fence him round with nets too high
For his o'erleaping? What I did, I did
Not with a random inconsiderate blow,
But from old Hate, and with maturing Time.
Here, where I struck, I take my rooted stand,
Upon the finished deed:[88] the blow so given,
And with wise forethought so by me devised,
That flight was hopeless, and to ward it vain.
With many-folding net, as fish are caught,
I drew the lines about him, mantled round
With bountiful destruction; twice I struck him,
And twice he groaning fell with limbs diffused
Upon the ground; and as he fell, I gave
The third blow, sealing him a votive gift
To gloomy Hades, saviour of the dead.
And thus he spouted forth his angry soul,
Bubbling a bitter stream of frothy slaughter,
And with the dark drops of the gory dew
Bedashed me; I delighted nothing less
Than doth the flowery calix, full surcharged
With fruity promise, when Jove's welkin down
Distils the rainy blessing. Men of Argos,
Rejoice with me in this, or, if ye will not,

Then do I boast alone. If e'er 'twas meet
To pour libations to the dead, he hath them
In justest measure. By most righteous doom,
Who drugged the cup with curses to the brim,
Himself hath drunk damnation to the dregs.

Chorus. Thou art a bold-mouthed woman. Much we marvel
To hear thee boast thy husband's murder thus.

Clytem. Ye tempt me as a woman, weak, unschooled.
But what I say, ye know, or ought to know,
I say with fearless heart. Your praise or blame
Is one to me. Here Agamemnon lies,
My husband, dead, the work of this right hand—
The hand of a true workman. Thus it stands.

STROPHE.

Chorus. Woman! what food on wide earth growing
Hast thou eaten of? What draught
From the briny ocean quaffed,
That for such deed the popular breath
Of Argos should with curses crown thee,
As a victim crowned for death?
Thou hast cast off: thou hast cut off
Thine own husband:[89] thou shalt be
From the city of the free
Thyself a cast-off: justly hated
With staunch hatred unabated.

Clytem. My sentence thou hast spoken; shameful flight,
The citizens' hate, the people's vengeful curse:
For him thou hast no curse, the bloody man
Who, when the fleecy flocks innumerous pastured,
Passed the brute by, and sacrificed my child,
My best-beloved, fruit of my throes, to lull
The Thracian blasts asleep. Why did thy wrath,
In righteous guerdon of this foulest crime,
Not chase this man from Greece? A greedy ear
And a harsh tongue thou hast for me alone.
But mark my words,[90] threats I repay with threats;
If that thou canst subdue me in fair fight,
Subdue me; but if Jove for me decide,
Thou shalt be wise, when wisdom comes too late.

ANTISTROPHE.

Chorus. Thou art high and haughty-hearted,
And from lofty thoughts within thee

Mighty words are brimming o'er:
For thy sober sense is madded
With the purple-dripping gore;
And thine eyes with fatness swell[91]
From bloody feasts: but mark me well,
Time shall come, avenging Time,
And hunt thee out, and track thy crime:
Then thou, when friends are far, shalt know
Stroke for stroke, and blow for blow.

Clytem. Hear thou this oath, that seals my cause with right:
By sacred Justice, perfecting revenge,
By Até, and the Erinnys of my child,
To whom I slew this man, I shall not tread
The threshold of pale Fear, the while doth live
Ægisthus, now, as he hath been, my friend,
Stirring the flame that blazes on my hearth,
My shield of strong assurance. For the slain,
Here lieth he that wronged a much-wronged woman,
Sweet honey-lord of Trojan Chryseids.
And for this spear-won maid, this prophetess,
This wise diviner, well-beloved bed-fellow,
And trusty messmate of great Agamemnon,
She shares his fate, paying with him the fee
Of her own sin, and like a swan hath sung
Her mortal song beside him. She hath been
Rare seasoning added to my banquet rare.

STROPHE I.[92]

Chorus. O would some stroke of Fate—no dull disease
Life's strings slow-rending,
No bed-bound pain—might bring, my smart to soothe,
The sleep unending!
For he, my gracious lord, my guide, is gone,
Beyond recalling;
Slain for a woman's cause, and by the hands
Of woman falling.

STROPHE II.

O Helen! Helen! phrenzied Helen,
Many hearts of thee are telling!
Damned destruction thou hast done,
There where thousands fell for one
'Neath the walls of Troy

ANTISTROPHE II.

Bloomed from thee the blossom gory
Of famous Agamemnon's glory;
Thou hast roused the slumbering strife,
From age to age, with eager knife,
Watching to destroy.

STROPHE III.

Clytem. Death invoke not to relieve thee
From the ills that vainly grieve thee!
Nor, with ire indignant swelling,
Blame the many-murdering Helen!
Damned destruction did she none,
There, where thousands fell for one,
'Neath the walls of Troy.

ANTISTROPHE I.

O god that o'er the doomed Atridan halls[93]
With might prevailest,
Weak woman's breast to do thy headlong will
With murder mailest!
O'er his dead body, like a boding raven,
Thou tak'st thy station,
Piercing my marrow with thy savage hymn
Of exultation.

ANTISTROPHE III.

Clytem. Nay, but now thou speakest wisely;
This thrice-potent god precisely
Works our woe, and weaves our sorrow.
He with madness stings the marrow,
And with greed that thirsts for blood;
Ere to-day's is dry, the flood
Flows afresh to-morrow.

STROPHE IV.

Chorus. Him, even him, this terrible god, to bear
These walls are fated;
From age to age he worketh wildly there
With wrath unsated.
Not without Jove, Jove cause and end of all,
Nor working vainly.
Comes no event but with high sway the gods
Have ruled it plainly.

STROPHE V.

Chorus. O the king! the king! for thee
Tears in vain my cheek shall furrow,
Words in vain shall voice my sorrow!
As in a spider's web thou liest;
Godless meshes spread for thee,
An unworthy death thou diest!

STROPHE VI.

Chorus. There, even there thou liest, woe's me, outstretched
On couch inglorious;
O'er thee the knife prevailed, keen-edged, by damned
Deceit victorious.

STROPHE VII.

Clytem. Nay, be wise, and understand;
Say not Agamemnon's wife
Wielded in this human hand
The fateful knife.
But a god, my spirit's master,
The unrelenting old Alastor[94]
Chose this wife, his incarnation,
To avenge the desecration
Of foul-feasting Atreus; he
Gave, to work his wrath's completion,
To the babes this grown addition.

ANTISTROPHE IV.

Chorus. Thy crime is plain: bear thou what thou hast merit
Guilt's heavy lading;
But that fell Spirit, from sire to son inherited,
Perchance was aiding.
Black-mantled Mars through consanguineous gore
Borne onwards blindly,
Old horrors to atone, fresh Murder's store
Upheaps unkindly.

ANTISTROPHE V.

O the king! the king! for thee
Tears in vain my cheek shall furrow,
Words in vain shall voice my sorrow!
As in a spider's web thou liest;
Godless meshes spread for thee,
An unworthy death thou diest.

ANTISTROPHE VI.

Chorus. There, even there, thou liest, woe's me, outstretched
On couch inglorious!
O'er thee the knife prevailed, keen-edged, by damned
Deceit victorious.

ANTISTROPHE VII.

Clytem. Say not thou that he did die
By unworthy death inglorious;
Erst himself prevailed by damned
Deceit victorious,
Then when he killed the deep-lamented
Iphigenía, nor relented
When for my body's fruit with weeping
I besought him. Springs his reaping
From what seed he sowed. Not he
In Hades housed shall boast to-day;
So slain by steel as he did slay.

STROPHE VIII.

Chorus. I'm tossed with doubt, on no sure counsel grounded,
With fear confounded.
No drizzling drops, a red ensanguined shower,
Upon the crazy house, that was my tower,
Comes wildly sweeping,
On a new whetstone whets her blade the Fate
With eyes unweeping.

STROPHE IX.

Chorus. O Earth, O Earth, would thou hadst yawned,
And in thy black pit whelmed me wholly,
Ere I had seen my dear-loved lord
In the silver bath thus bedded lowly!
Who will bury him? and for him
With salt tears what eyes shall brim?
Wilt thou do it—thou, the wife
That slew thy husband with the knife?
Wilt thou dare, with blushless face,
Thus to offer a graceless grace?
With false show of pious moaning,
Thine own damned deed atoning?

STROPHE X.

Chorus. What voice the praises of the godlike man
Shall publish clearly?

And o'er his tomb the tear from eyelids wan
Shall drop sincerely?

STROPHE XI.

Clytem. In vain thy doubtful heart is tried
With many sorrows. By my hand
Falling he fell, and dying died.[95]
I too will bury him; but no train
Of mourning men for him shall plain
In our Argive streets; but rather
In the land of sunless cheer
She shall be his convoy; she,
Iphigenía, his daughter dear.
By the stream of woes* swift-flowing,
Round his neck her white arms throwing,
She shall meet her gentle father,
And greet him with a kiss.

ANTISTROPHE VIII.

Chorus. Crime quitting crime, and which the more profanely
Were questioned vainly;
'Tis robber robbed, and slayer slain, for, though
Oft-times it lag, with measured blow for blow
Vengeance prevaileth,
While great Jove lives.[96] Who breaks the close-linked wo
Which Heaven entaileth?

ANTISTROPHE IX.

Chorus. O Earth, O Earth, would thou hadst yawned,
And in thy black pit whelmed me wholly,
Ere I had seen my dear-loved lord
In the silver bath thus bedded lowly!
Who will bury him? and for him
With salt tears, what eyes shall brim?
Wilt thou do it? thou, the wife
That killed thy husband with the knife?
Wilt thou dare, with blushless face,
Thus to offer a graceless grace?
With false show of pious moaning
Thine own damned deed atoning?

* *πόρθμευμ ἀχέων*, whence Acheron, so familiar to English ears; as in the sa
way *Cocytus*, from *κωκυω*, to avail, and the other infernal streams, with a like approp
ateness.

ANTISTROPHE X.

Chorus. What voice the praises of the god-like man
Shall publish clearly?
And o'er his tomb the tear from eyelids wan
Shall drop sincerely?

ANTISTROPHE XI.

Clytem. Cease thy cries. Where Heaven entaileth,
Thyself didst say, woe there prevaileth.
But for this tide enough hath been
Of bloody work. My score is clean.
Now to the ancient stern Alastor,
That crowns the Pleisthenids* with disaster,
I vow, having reaped his crop of woe
From me, to others let him go,
And hold with them his bloody bridal,
Of horrid murders suicidal!
Myself, my little store amassed
Shall freely use, while it may last,
From murdering madness healed.

Enter ÆGISTHUS.

Ægis. O blessed light! O happy day proclaiming
The justice of the gods! Now may I say
The Olympians look from heaven sublime, to note
Our woes, and right our wrongs, seeing as I see
In the close meshes of the Erinnyes tangled
This man—sweet sight to see!—prostrate before me,
Having paid the forfeit of his father's crime.
For Atreus, ruler of this Argive land,
This dead man's father—to be plain—contending
About the mastery, banished from the city
Thyestes, his own brother and my father.
In suppliant guise back to his hearth again
The unhappy prince returned, content if he
Might tread his native acres, not besprent
With his own blood. Him with a formal show
Of hospitality—not love—received
The father of this dead, the godless Atreus;
And to my father for the savoury use
Of festive viands gave his children's flesh
To feed on; in a separate dish concealed

* The house of Atreus, so called from Pleisthenes, one of the ancestry of Agamemnon.

Were legs and arms, and the fingers' pointed tips,[97]
Broke from the body. These my father saw not;
But what remained, the undistinguished flesh,
He with unwitting greed devoured, and ate
A curse to Argos. Soon as known, his heart
Disowned the unholy feast, and with a groan
Back-falling he disgorged it. Then he vowed
Dark doom to the Pelopidae, and woes
Intolerable, while with his heel he spurned[98]
The supper, and thus voiced the righteous curse:
THUS PERISH ALL THE RACE OF PLEISTHENES!
See here the cause why Agamemnon died,
And why his death most righteous was devised
By me; for I, Thyestes' thirteenth son,
While yet a swaddled babe, was driven away
To houseless exile with my hapless sire.
But me avenging Justice nursed, and taught me,
Safer by distance, with invisible hand
To reach this man, and weave the brooded plot,
That worked his sure destruction. Now 'tis done;
And gladly might I die, beholding him,
There as he lies where Vengeance trapped his crimes.

Chorus. Ægisthus, that thou wantonest in the woe
Worked by thy crime I praise not. Thou alone
Didst slay this man, and planned the piteous slaughter
With willing heart. So say'st thou: but mark well,
Justice upon thy head the stony curse
Shall bring avoidless from the people's hand.

Ægis. How? Thou who sittest on the neathmost bench,
Speak'st thus to me who ply the upper oar?
'Tis a hard task to teach an old man wisdom,
And dullness at thy years is doubly dull;
But chains and hunger's pangs sure leeches are,
And no diviner vends more potent balms
To drug a doting wit.[99] Have eyes, and see,
Kick not against the pricks, nor vainly beat
Thy head on rocks.

Chorus [*to* CLYTEMNESTRA]. Woman, how couldst thou dare,
On thine own hearth to plot thy husband's death;
First having shamed his bed, to welcome him
With murder from the wars?

Ægis. Speak on; each word shall be a fount of tears,
I'll make thy tongue old Orpheus' opposite.

He with sweet sounds led wild beasts where he would,
Thou where thou wilt not shalt be led, confounding
The woods with baby cries. Thou barkest now,
But, being bound, the old man shall be tame.

Chorus. A comely king wert thou to rule the Argives!
Whose wit had wickedness to plan the deed,
But failed the nerve in thy weak hand to do it.

Ægis. 'Twas wisely schemed with woman's cunning wit
To snare him. I, from ancient date his foe,
Stood in most just suspicion. Now, 'tis done;
And I, succeeding to his wealth, shall know
To hold the reins full tightly. Who rebels
Shall not with corn be fatted for my traces,
But, stiffly haltered, he shall lodge secure
In darkness, with starvation for his mate.

Chorus. Hear me yet once. Why did thy dastard hand
Shrink from the deed? But now his wife hath done it,
Tainting this land with murder most abhorred,
Polluting Argive gods. But still Orestes
Looks on the light; him favouring Fortune shall
Nerve with one stroke to smite this guilty pair.

Ægis. Nay, if thou for brawls art eager, and for battle, thou shalt know—

Chorus. Ho! my gallant co-mates, rouse ye![100] 'tis an earnest business now!
Quick, each hand with sure embracement hold the dagger by the hilt!

Ægis. I can also hold a hilted dagger—not afraid to die.

Chorus. DIE!—we catch the word thou droppest; lucky chance, if thou wert dead!

Clytem. Not so, best-beloved! there needeth no enlargement to our ills.
We have reaped a liberal harvest, gleaned a crop of fruitful woes,
Gained a loss in brimming measure: blood's been shed enough to-day.
Peacefully, ye hoary Elders, enter now your destined homes,
Ere mischance o'ertake you, deeming WHAT IS DONE HATH SO BEEN DONE,
AS IT BEHOVED TO BE, contented if the dread god add no more,
He that now the house of Pelops smiteth in his anger dire.
Thus a woman's word doth warn ye, if that ye have wit to hear.

Ægis. Babbling fools are they; and I forsooth must me
bear the shower,
Flowers of contumely cast from doting drivellers, temp
fate!
O! if length of hoary winters brought discretion, ye sh
know
Where the power is; wisely subject you the weak to me
strong.

Chorus. Ill beseems our Argive mettle to court a coward o
throne.

Ægis. Shielded now, be brave with words; my deeds ex
some future day.

Chorus. Ere that day belike some god shall bring Orestes to
home.

Ægis. Feed, for thou hast nothing better, thou and he,
empty hope.

Chorus. Glut thy soul, a lusty sinner, with sin's fatness, w
thou may'st.

Ægis. Thou shalt pay the forfeit, greybeard, of thy brag
tongue anon.

Chorus. Oh, the cock beside its partlet now may crow r
valiantly!

Clytem. Heed not thou these brainless barkings. While to f
folly calls,
Thou and I with wise command shall surely sway th
Argive halls.

CHOEPHORÆ

OR, THE LIBATION-BEARERS

A LYRICO-DRAMATIC SPECTACLE

Ἐκ γὰρ Ὀρέσταο τίσις ἔσσεται Ἀτρέιδαο
Ὁππότ' ἂν ἡβήσῃ τε καὶ ἧς ἱμείρεται ἄλης.

HOMER.

Think upon our father,
Give the sword scope—think what a man was he.

LANDOR.

PERSONS

ORESTES, Son of Agamemnon.
PYLADES, Friend of Orestes.
CHORUS OF CAPTIVE WOMEN.
ELECTRA, Sister of Orestes.
NURSE OF ORESTES.
CLYTEMNESTRA, Mother of Orestes.
ÆGISTHUS.
SERVANT.

SCENE *as in the preceding piece. The Tomb of Agamemnon in the centre of the Stage.*

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

THE right of the avenger of blood, so familiar to us from its prominency in the Mosaic Law (see Numbers, chap. 35), is a moral phenomenon which belongs to a savage or semi-civilized state of society in all times and places; and appears everywhere with the most distinct outline in the rich records of the early age of Greece, which we possess in the Homeric poems. No doubt, the most glowing intensity, and the passionate exaggeration of the feeling, from which this right springs, is found only among the hot children of the Arabian desert;* and in no point of his various enactments were the wisdom and the humanity of their great Jewish lawgiver more conspicuous than in the appointment of sacerdotal cities of refuge, which set certain intelligible bounds of space and time to the otherwise interminable prosecution of family feuds, and the gratification of private revenge. But the great traits of the system of private revenge for manslaughter, stand out clearly in the Iliad and Odyssey; and the whole of the ancient heroic mythology of Greece is full of adventures and strange chances that grew out of this germ. Out of many, I shall mention only the following instance. In the twenty-third book of the Iliad (v. 82), when the shade of Patroclus appears at the head of his sorrowful, sleeping friend, after urging the necessity of instant funeral, for the peace of his soul, he proceeds to make a further request, as follows:—

"This request I make, this strict injunction I on thee would lay,
Not apart from thine Achilles, place thy dear Patroclus' bones;
But together as, like brothers, in your father's house we grew,
Then when me, yet young, Menœtius from the Locrian Opus guiding,
To the halls of Peleus brought because that I had slain a man,
Even thy son, Amphidamas, whom unwittingly of life I reft
In a brainish moment, foolishly, when we quarrelled o'er the dice;
Then the horseman, Peleus, kindly took me to his house, and kindly
Reared me with his son, and bade me be thy comrade to the end;
So my bones, when they are gathered, place where thine shall also be,
In the two-eared golden urn which gracious Thetis gave to thee."

In these verses, we see the common practice of the heroic ages in Greece, with regard to manslaughter. No matter how slight the occasion might be out of which the lethal quarrel arose; how

* See Niebuhr's Travels (§ 25, c. 4); Michaelis' Commentaries on the Laws of Moses Art. 135); and Southey's Thalaba.

innocent soever of all hostile intention the unhappy offender; only safety to him from the private revenge of the kinsman of person unwittingly slain, was to flee to a country that acknowledg some foreign chief, and find both a friend and a country in a dist land. All this, too, in an era of civilization, when courts of law a regular judges (as from various passages of Homer is appare were not altogether unknown; but nature is stronger than law, a passion slow to yield up its fiery right of summary revenge, for cold, calculating retribution of an impartial judge.

The person on whom the duty of avenging shed blood, accord to the heroic code of morals, fell, was the nearest of kin to person whose blood had been shed; and accordingly we find stated more at large by Gesenius and Michaelis*) that in Hebrew language, the same word means both an avenger of bl and a kinsman, while in the cognate Arabic the term for an aven means also a *survivor*—that is, the surviving kinsman. In the sa way, when Clytemnestra, as we have just seen in the previ drama, had treacherously murdered her husband Agamemnon, code of social morality then existing laid the duty of avenging most unnatural deed on the nearest relation of the murde chieftain, viz.—his son, Orestes; a sore duty indeed, in this c as the principal offender was his own mother: so that in vindi ing one feeling of his filial nature the pious son had to do viole to another; but a duty it still remained; and there does not app the slightest trace that it was considered one whit the less imp tive on account of the peculiar relation that existed here betw the dealer of the vengeful blow and the person on whom it dealt. WHOSO SHEDDETH MAN'S BLOOD BY MAN SHALL HIS BL BE SHED was the old patriarchal law on the subject, proclai without limitation and without exception; and the cry of innoc blood rose to Heaven with peculiar emphasis when the sufferer both a father and a king.

> "Good, how good, when one who dies unjustly leaves a son behind hi
> To avenge his death!"—ODYSS. iii. 196,

is the wisdom of old Nestor with regard to this subject and very case: and the wise goddess Athena, the daughter of Supreme Councillor, in whom "all her father lives," stamps distinct approval on the deed of Orestes, by which Clytemne was murdered, and holds him up as an illustrious example Telemachus, by which his own conduct was to be regulated

* *Dictionary*—voce GOEL, and Commentaries, § 131.

reference to the insolent and unjust suitors who were consuming his father's substance.

"This when thou hast done, and well accomplished, as the need demands,
Then behoves thee in thy mind with counsel rife to ponder well
How the suitors that obscenely riot in thy father's halls
Thou by force or fraud may'st slay: for surely now the years are come,
When too old thou art to trifle like a child with childish things.
Hast not heard what fair opinion the divine Orestes reaped
From the general voice consenting to the deed, then when he slew
The deceitful false Ægisthus, slayer of his famous sire."

ODYSSEY i. 293.

Public opinion, therefore, to use a modern phrase, not only justified Orestes in compassing the death of his mother, but imperatively called on him to do so. Public opinion, however, could not control Nature, nor save the unfortunate instrument of paternal retribution from that revulsion of feeling which must necessarily ensue, when the hand of the son is once red with the blood of her whose milk he had sucked. Orestes finds himself torn in twain by two contrary instincts, the victim of two antagonist rights. No sooner are the Furies of the father asleep, than those of the mother awake; and thus the bloody catastrophe of the present piece prepares the way for that tragic conflict of opposing moral claims set forth with such power in the third piece of this trilogy—the Eumenides.

The action of this play is the simplest possible, and will, for the most part, explain itself sufficiently as it proceeds. Clytemnestra, disturbed in conscience, and troubled by evil dreams, sends a chorus of young women to offer libations at the tomb of Agamemnon, which, in the present play, may fitly be conceived as occupying the centre of the stage.* These "libation-bearers" give the name to the piece. In their pious function, Electra, the daughter of Agamemnon, joins; and as she is engaged in the solemn rite, her brother Orestes (who had been living as an exile in Phocis with Strophius, married to Anaxibia, the sister of Agamemnon) suddenly arrives, and making himself known to his sister, plans with her the murder of Ægisthus and Clytemnestra—which is accordingly executed. Scarcely is this done, when the Furies of the murdered mother appear, and commence that chase of the unhappy son from land to land, which is ended in the next piece only by the eloquent intercession of Apollo, and the deliberative wisdom of the blue-eyed virgin-goddess of the Acropolis.

As a composition, the Choephoræ is decidedly inferior both to

* Die Thymele in der Orchestra ist durch ein Aschenkrug als Agamemnon's Grab bezeichnet.—DROYSEN.

the Agamemnon which precedes, and the Eumenides which follow it; and the poet, as if sensible of this weakness, following th approved tactics of rhetoricians and warriors, has dexterously place it in a position where its deficiencies are least observed. At th same time, in passing a critical judgment on this piece we mu bear in mind two things—*first*, that some parts of this play tha appear languid, long-drawn, and ineffective to us who read, ma have been overflowing with the richest emotional power in the living musical exhibition; and, *secondly*, that many parts, especial of the choral chaunts, have been so maimed and shattered by tim that the modern commentator is perhaps as much chargeable wi the faults of the translation as the ancient tragedian.

CHOEPHORÆ

Enter ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

Orest. Hermes, that wieldest underneath the ground
What power thy father lent,[1] be thou my saviour
And my strong help, and grant his heart's request
To the returning exile! On this mound,
My father's tomb, my father I invoke,
To hear my cry!

* * * * * *

* * My early growth of hair
To Inachus I vowed;[2] this later lock
The right of grief for my great sire demands.

* * * * *

But what is this? what sad procession comes
Of marshalled maids in sable mantles clad?
What mission brings them? Some new woe that breaks
Upon our fated house? Or, do they come
To soothe the ancient anger of the dead
With sweet libations for my father's tomb?
'Tis even so: for lo! Electra comes—
My sister—with them in unblissful grief
Pre-eminent. O Jove, be thou mine aid,[3]
And nerve my hand to avenge my father's wrong!
Stand we aside, my Pylades, that we
May learn the purpose of the murky pomp. [*They go aside.*

CHORUS, *dressed in sable vestments, bearing vessels with libations.*

STROPHE I.

Missioned from these halls I come
In the sable pomp of woe,
Here to wail and pour libations,
With the bosom-beating blow;
And my cheeks, that herald sorrow,[4]
With the fresh-cut nail-ploughed furrow,
Grief's vocation show.

See! my rent and ragged stole
Speaks the conflict of my soul;
My vex'd heart on grief is feeding,
Night and day withouten rest;
Riven with the ruthless mourning,
Hangs the linen vest, adorning
Woefully my breast.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Breathing wrath through nightly slumbers,
By a dream-encompassed lair,
Prophet of the house of Pelops,
Terror stands with bristling hair.
Through the dark night fitful yelling,
He within our inmost dwelling
Did the sleeper scare.
Heavily, heavily terror falls
On the woman-governed halls!
And, instinct with high assurance,
Speak the wise diviners all;
"The dead, the earth-hid dead are fretful,
And for vengeance unforgetful,
From their graves they call."

STROPHE II.

This graceless grace to do, to ward
What ills the dream portendeth
This pomp—O mother Earth!—and me
The godless woman sendeth.
Thankless office! Can I dare,
Naming thee, to mock the air?
Blood that stains with purple track
The ground, what price can purchase back?
O the hearth beset with mourning!
O the proud halls' overturning!
Darkness, blithe sight's detestation,
Sunless sorrow spread
Round the house of desolation,
Whence the lord is fled.

ANTISTROPHE II.

The kingly majesty that was
The mighty, warlike-hearted,
That swayed the general ear and will,
The unconquered, hath departed.

And now fear rules,[5] and we obey,
Unwillingly, a loveless sway.
Who holds the key of plenty's portals
Is god, and more than god to mortals;
But justice from her watchful station,
With a sure-winged visitation
Swoops; and some in blazing noon
She for doom doth mark,
Some in lingering eve, and some
In the deedless dark.

EPODE.

When mother Earth hath drunk black gore,
Printed on the faithful floor,
The staring blot remaineth;
There the deep disease is lurking;
There thrice double-guilt is working
Woes that none restraineth.
As virgin-chambers once polluted
Never may be pure again,
So filthy hands with blood bedabbled[6]
All the streams of all the rivers
Flow to wash in vain.
For me I suffer what I must;
By ordinance divine,
Since Troy was levelled with the dust
The bondman's fate is mine.
What the masters of my fate
In their strength decree,[7]
Just or unjust, matters not,
Is the law to me.
I must look content; and chain
Strongest hate with tightest rein;
I for my mistress' woes must wail,
And for my own, beneath the veil;[8]
I must sit apart,
And thaw with tears my frozen heart,
When no eye may see.

Lenoir Rhyne College Library

Enter ELECTRA.

Elect. Ye ministering maids with dexterous heed
That tend this household, as with me ye share

This pomp of supplication, let me share
In your good counsel. Speak, and tell me how,
This flood funereal pouring on the tomb,
I shall find utterance in well-omened words?
Shall I declare me bearer of sweet gifts
From a dear wife to her dear lord? I fear
To mingle faslehood with libations pure,
Poured on my father's tomb.[9] Or shall I pray,
As mortals wont to pray, that he may send
Just retribution, and a worthy gift
Of ill for ill to them that sent these garlands?
Or shall I silent stand, nor with my tongue
Give honour, as in dumb dishonoured death
My father died, and give the Earth to drink
A joyless stream, as who throws lustral ashes[10]
With eyes averse, and flings the vase away?
Your counsel here I crave; ye are my friends,
And bear with me, within these fated halls
A common burden. Speak, and no craven fear
Lurk in your breasts! The man that lives most free,
And him to sternest masterdom enthralled,
One fate abides. Lend me your wisdom, friends.

Chorus. Thy father's tomb shall be to me an altar;
As before God I'll speak the truth to thee.

Elect. Speak thus devoutly, and thou'lt answer well.

Chorus. Give words of seemly honour, as thou pourest,
To all that love thy father.

Elect. Who are they?

Chorus. Thyself the first, and whoso hates Ægisthus.

Elect. That is myself and thou.

Chorus. Thyself may'st judge.

Elect. Hast thou none else to swell the scanty roll?

Chorus. One far away, thy brother, add—Orestes.

Elect. 'Tis well remembered, very well remembered.

Chorus. Nor them forget that worked the deed of guilt.

Elect. Ha! what of them? I'd hear of this more nearly.

Chorus. Pray that some god may come, or mortal man.

Elect. Judge or avenger?

Chorus. Roundly pray the prayer,
Some god or man may come to slay the slayer.

Elect. And may I pray the gods such boon as this?

Chorus. Why not? What other quittance to a foe
Than hate repaid with hate, and blow with blow?[11]

Elect. [*approaching to the tomb of Agamemnon*]. Hermes, that swayest underneath the ground,*[12]
Of powers divine, Infernal and Supernal,
Most weighty herald, herald me in this,
That every subterranean god, and earth,
Even mother earth, who gave all things their birth,
And nurseth the reviving germs of all,
May hear my prayer, and with their sleepless eyes
Watch my parental halls. And while I dew
Thy tomb with purifying stream, O father,
Pity thou me, and on thy loved Orestes
With pity look, and to our long lost home
Restore us!—us, poor friendless outcasts both,
Bartered by her who bore us, and exchanged
Thy love for his who was thy murderer.
Myself do menial service in this house;
Orestes lives in exile; and they twain
In riot waste the fruits of thy great toils.
Hear thou my prayers, and quickly send Orestes
With happy chance to claim his father's sceptre!
And give thou me a wiser heart, and hand
More holy-functioned than the mother's was
That bore thy daughter. Thus much for myself,
And for my friends. To those that hate my father,
Rise thou with vengeance mantled-dark to smite
Those justly that unjustly smote the just.
These words of evil imprecation dire,[13]
Marring the pious tenor of my prayer,
I speak constrained: but thou for me and mine
Send good, and only good, to the upper air,
The gods being with thee, mother Earth, and Justice
With triumph in her train. This prayer receive
And these libations. Ye, my friends, the while
Let your grief blossom in luxuriant wail,
Lifting the solemn pæan of the dead.

Chorus.[14] Flow! in plashing torrents flow!
Wretched grief for wretched master!
O'er this heaped mound freely flow,
Refuge of my heart's disaster!
O thou dark majestic shade,

* Hermes, or Mercury, in his capacity of guide of the dead (ψυχοπομπός) is here called Χθόνιος, or subterranean.

Hear, O hear me! While anear thee
Pours this sorrow-stricken maid
The pure libation,
May the solemn wail we lift
Atone the guilt that taints the gift
With desecration!
O that some god from Scythia far,
To my imploring,
Might send a spearman strong in war,
Our house restoring!
Come Mars, with back-bent bow, thy hail
Of arrows pouring,
Or with the hilted sword assail,
And in the grapple close prevail,
Of battle roaring!

Elect.[15] These mild libations, earth-imbibed, my father
Hath now received. Thy further counsel lend.
Chorus. In what? Within me leaps my heart for fear.
Elect. Seest thou this lock of hair upon the tomb?
Chorus. A man's hair is it, or a low-zoned maid's?[16]
Elect. Few points there are to hit. 'Tis light divining.
Chorus. I am thine elder; yet I fain would reap
Instruction from young lips.
Elect. If it was clipt
From head in Argos, it should be my own.[17]
Chorus. For they that should have shorn the mourning lock
Are foes, not friends.
Elect. 'Tis like, O strange! how like!
Chorus. Like what? What strange conception stirs thy brain
Elect. 'Tis like—O strange!—to these same locks I wear.
And yet—
Chorus. Not being yours, there's none, I know,
Can claim it but Orestes.
Elect. In sooth, 'tis like.
Trimmed with one plume Orestes was and I.
Chorus. But how should he have dared to tread this ground?
Elect. Belike, he sent it by another's hand,
A votive lock to grace his father's tomb.
Chorus. Small solace to my grief, if that he lives,
Yet never more may touch his native soil.
Elect. I, too, as with a bitter wave was lashed,
And pierced, as with an arrow, at the sight
Of this loved lock; and from my thirsty eyne

With troubled overflowings unrestrained
The full tide gushes: for none here would dare
To gift a lock to Agamemnon's grave;
No citizen, much less the wife that slew him.
My mother most unmotherly, her own children
With godless hate pursuing, evil-minded:
And though to think this wandering lock have graced
My brother's head—even his—my loved Orestes,
Were bliss too great, yet will I hold the hope.
O that this lock might with articulate voice
Pronounce a herald's tale, and I no more
This way and that with dubious thought be swayed!
That I might know if from a hostile head
'Twas shorn, and hate it as it hate deserves,
Or, if from friends, my sorrows' fellow make it,
The dearest grace of my dear father's tomb!
But the gods know our woes; them we invoke,
Whirled to and fro in eddies of dark doubt,
Like vessels tempest-tossed. If they will save us,
They have the power from smallest seed to raise
The goodliest tree. But lo! a further proof[18]—
Footsteps, a perfect print, that seem to bear
A brotherhood with mine! Nay, there are two—
This claimed by him, and that by some true friend
That shares his wanderings. See, the heel, the sole,
Thus measured with my own, prove that they were
Both fashioned in one mould. 'Tis very strange!
I'm racked with doubt, my wits are wandering.

Orest. [*coming forward*]. Nay, rather thank the gods! Thy first prayer granted,
Pray that fair end may fair beginning follow.[19]

Elect. Sayest thou? What cause have I to thank the gods?

Orest. Even here before thee stands thine answered prayer.

Elect. One man I wish to see: dost know him—thou?

Orest. Thy wish of wishes is to see Orestes.

Elect. Even so: but wishing answers no man's prayer.

Orest. I am the man. No dearer one expect
That wears that name.

Elect. Nay, but this is some plot?

Orest. That were to frame a plot against myself.

Elect. Unkind, to scoff at my calamities!

Orest. To scoff at thine, were scoffing at mine own.

Elect. And can it be? Art thou indeed Orestes?

Orest. My bodily self thou seest, and dost not know!
And yet the votive lock shorn from my head,
Being to thine, my sister's hair, conform,
And my foot's print with curious ardour scanned,
Could wing thy faith beyond the reach of sense,
That thou didst seem to see me! Take the lock,
And match it nicely with this mother crop
That bore it. More; behold this web,[20] the fruit
Of thine own toil, the strokes of thine own shuttle,
The wild beasts of the woods by thine own hand
Empictured! Nay, be calm, and keep thy joy
Within wise bounds. Too well I know that they
Who should be friends here are our bitterest foes.
Elect. O of my father's house the chiefest care!
Seed of salvation, hope with many tears
Bewept, with thy strong arm thou shalt restore
Thy father's house. O my life's eye, thou dost
Four several functions corporate in one
Discharge for me! My father thou, and thine
The gentler love that should have been my mother's,
My justly hated mother; and in her place,
Who died by merciless immolation,* thou
Must be my sister, so even as thou art
My faithful brother, loved much and revered.
May Power and Justice aid thee, mighty Twain,[21]
And a third mightier, Jove supremely great.
Orest. O Jove, great Jove, of all these things be thou
Spectator! And behold the orphan'd brood,
Of eagle father strangled in the folds
And deadly coil of loathly basilisk!
Them sireless see in dire starvation's gripe,
Too weak of wing to bear unto the nest
Their father's prey. So we before thee stand,
Myself and this Electra, sire-bereaved,
And exiles both from our paternal roof.
If we, the chickens of the pious father
That crowned thee with much sacrifice, shall fail,
Where shalt thou find a hand like his, to offer
Gifts from the steaming banquet? If the brood
Of the eagle perish, where shall be thy signs,
That speak from Heaven persuasive to mankind?
If all this royal trunk shall rot, say who,

* Iphigenia.

When blood of oxen flows on holidays,
Shall stand beside thine altar? O give ear,
And of this house so little now, and fallen
So low, rebuild the fortunes!

Chorus. Hush, my children!
If ye would save your father's house, speak softly,
Lest some one hear, and, with swift babblement,
Inform their ears who rule; whom may I see
Flayed on a fire, with streaming pitch well fed!

Orest. Fear not. The mighty oracle of Loxias,
By whose commands I dare the thing I dare,
Will not deceive me. He, with shrill-voiced warning,
Foretold that freezing pains through my warm liver
Should torturing shoot, if backward to avenge
My father's death, and even as he was slain,
To slay the slayers, exasperate at the loss[22]
Of my so fair possessions. Thus to do
He gave me strict injunction: else myself
With terrible pains, of filial zeal remiss,
Should pay the fine. The evil-minded Powers
Beneath the Earth[23] would visit me in wrath,
A leprous tetter with corrosive tooth
Creep o'er my skin, and fasten on my flesh,
And with white scales the white hair grow, defacing
My bloom of health; and from my father's tomb
Ripe with avenging ire the Erinnyes
Should ruthlessly invade me. Thus he spake,
And through the dark his prescient eyebrow arched.[24]
Sharp arrows through the subterranean night,
Shot by dear Shades that through the Infernal halls
Roam peaceless, madness, and vain fear o' nights,
Prick with sharp goads, and chase from street to street,
With iron scourge, the meagre-wasted form
Of the Fury-hunted sinner; him no share
In festal cup awaits, or hallowed drop
Of pure libation;[25] the paternal wrath,
Hovering unseen, shall drive him from the altar;
Him shall no home receive, no lodgment hold,
Unhonoured and unfriended he shall die,
Withered and mummied with the hot dry plague.
Such oracle divine behoves me trust
With single faith, or, be I faithless, still
The vengeance must be done. All things concur

To point my purpose; the divine command
My sore heart-grief for a loved father's death,
The press of want, the spoiling of my goods,
The shame to see these noble citizens,
Proud Troy's destroyers, basely bent beneath
The yoke of two weak women: for he hath
A woman's soul: if not, the proof is near.

Chorus. Mighty Fates, divinely guiding
Human fortunes to their end,
Send this man, with Jove presiding,
Whither Justice points the way.
Words of bitter hatred duly
Pay with bitter words: for thus
With loud cry triumphant shouting
Justice pays the sinner's debt.
BLOOD FOR BLOOD AND BLOW FOR BLOW,
THOU SHALT REAP AS THOU DIDST SOW;
Age to age with hoary wisdom
Speaketh thus to men.[26]

STROPHE I.

Orest. O father, wretched father, with what air
Of word or deed impelling,
Shall I be strong to waft the filial prayer
To thy dim distant dwelling?
There where in dark, the dead-man's day, thou liest,[27]
Be our sharp wailing
(Grace of the dead, and Hades' honour highest),
With thee prevailing!

STROPHE II.

Chorus. Son, the strong-jawed funeral fire
Burns not the mind in the smoky pyre;
Sleeps, but not forgets the dead
To show betimes his anger dread.
For the dead the living moan,
That the murderer may be known.
They who mourn for parent slain
Shall not pour the wail in vain,
Bright disclosure shall not lack
Who through darkness hunts the track.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Elect. Hear thou our cries, O father, when for thee
The frequent tear is falling;
The wailing pair o'er thy dear tomb to thee
From their hearts' depths are calling;
The suppliant and the exile at one tomb
Their sorrow showering,
Helpless and hopeless; mantled round with gloom,
Woe overpouring!

Chorus. Nay, be calm; the god that speaks
With voice oracular shall attune
Thy throat to happier notes;
Instead the voice of wail funereal,
Soon the jubilant shout shall shake
His father's halls with joy, and welcome
The new friend to his home.

STROPHE III.

Orest. If but some Lycian spear, 'neath Ilium's walls,
Had lowly laid thee,
A mighty name in the Atridan halls
Thou wouldst have made thee!
Then hadst thou pitched thy fortune like a star,
To son and grandson shining from afar;
Beyond the wide-waved sea, the high-heaped mound
Had told for ever
Thy feats of battle, and with glory crowned
Thy high endeavour.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Chorus. Ah! would that thou hadst found thy end
There, where dear friend fell with friend,
And marched with them to Hades dread,
The monarch of the awful dead,[28]
Sitting beside the throne with might
Of them that rule the realms of night;
For thou in life wert monarch true,
Expert each kingly deed to do,
Leading, with thy persuasive rod,
Submissive mortals like a god.

ANTISTROPHE III.

Elect. Thou wert a king, no fate it was for thee
To die as others

'Neath Ilium's walls, far, far beyond the sea,
With many brothers.
Unworthy was the spear to drink thy blood,
Where far Scamander rolls his swirling flood.
Justly who slew had drawn themselves thy lot,
And perished rather,
And thou their timeless fate had welcomed, not
They thine, my father.
Chorus. Child, thy grief begetteth visions
Brighter than gold, and overtopping
Hyperborean bliss.[29]
Ah, here the misery rudely riots,
With double lash. These twins, their help
Sleeps beneath the ground; and they
Who hold dominion here, alas!
With unholy sceptre sway.
Woe is me! but chiefly woe
Children dear to you!

STROPHE IV.

Elect. Chiefly to me! Thy words shoot like an arrow,
And pierce my marrow.
O Jove, O Jove! that sendest from below[30]
The retribution slow,
Against the stout heart and bold hand,
That dared defy thy high command.
Even though a parent feel the woe,
Prepare, prepare the finished blow.

STROPHE V.

Chorus. Mine be soon to lift the strain,
O'er the treacherous slayer slain,
To shout with bitter exultation,
O'er the murtherous wife's prostration!
Why should I the hate conceal,
That spurs my heart with promptest zeal,
Bitter thoughts, that gathering grow,
Like blustering winds, that beat the plunging vessel's prow

ANTISTROPHE IV.

Orest. O thou that flourishest, and mak'st to flourish,
By thy hands perish
All they that hate me! Cleave the heads of those,
That are Orestes' foes!

Pledge the land in peace to live,
For injustice justice give;
Ye that honoured reign below,[31]
Furies! prepare the crowning blow.
Chorus. Wont hath been, and shall be ever,
That when purple gouts bedash
The guilty ground, then BLOOD DOTH BLOOD
DEMAND, AND BLOOD FOR BLOOD SHALL FLOW.
Fury to Havoc cries; and Havoc,
The tainted track of blood pursuing,
From age to age works woe.

STROPHE VI.

Elect. Ye powers of Hades dread!
Fell Curses of the Dead,
Hear me when I call!
Behold! The Atridan hall,
Dashed in dishonoured fall,
Lies low and graceless all.
O mighty Jove, I see
Mine only help in thee!

ANTISTROPHE V.

Chorus. Thy piteous tale doth make my heart
From its central hold back start;
Hope departs, and blackening Fear
Rules my fancy, while I hear.
And if blithe confidence awhile[32]
Lends my dull faith the feeble smile,
Soon, soon departs that glimpse of cheer,
And all my map of things is desolate and drear.

ANTISTROPHE VI.

Orest. For why! our tale of wrong
In hate of parents strong,
Spurneth the flatterer's arm,
Mocketh the soothing charm.
The mother gave her child[33]
This wolfish nature wild;
And I from her shall learn
To be thus harsh and stern.

STROPHE VII.

Chorus. Like a Persian mourner[34]
Singing sorrow's tale,
Like a Cissian wailer,
I did weep and wail.
O'er my head swift-oaring
Came arm on arm amain,
The voice of my deploring
Like the lashing rain!
Sorrow's rushing river
O'er me flooding spread,
Black misfortune's quiver
Emptied on my head!

Elect. Mother bold, all-daring,
On a bloody bier
Thine own lord forth bearing
Slain without a tear.
Alone, unfriended he did go
Down to the sunless homes below.

STROPHE VIII.

Orest. Thou hast named the dire dishonor;
The gods shall send swift judgment on her.
By Heaven's command,
By her own son's hand,
Slain she shall lie;
And I, having dealt the fated death,
Myself shall die!

ANTISTROPHE VII.

Elect. Be the butcher's work remembered,
Mangled was he, and dismembered;
Like vilest clay,
She cast him away,
With burial base;
Mocking the son, the father branding
With dark disgrace.

ANTISTROPHE VIII.

Orest. Thou dost tell too truly
All my father's woe.

Elect. I, the while, accounted
Lower than most low,

Like a dog, was sundered
From my father's hearth,
An evil dog, and wandered
Far from seats of mirth;
In my chamber weeping
Tears of silent woe,
From rude gazers keeping
Grief too great for show.
Hear these words; and hearing
Nail them in thy soul,
With steady purpose nearing,
And noiseless pace, thy goal.
Go where just wrath leads the way,
With stout heart tread the lists to-day.

STROPHE IX.

Orest. O father, help thy friends, when helping thee!
Elect. My tears, if they can help, shall flow for thee.
Chorus. And this whole mingled choir shall raise for thee
The sistered cry: O hear!
In light of day appear,
And help thy banded friends, to avenge thy foes for thee!

ANTISTROPHE IX.

Orest. Now might with might engage, and right with right!
Elect. And the gods justly the unjust shall smite.
Chorus.[86] The tremulous fear creeps o'er my frame to hear
Thy words; for, though long-dated,
The thing divinely fated
Shall surely come at last, our cloudy prayers to clear.

STROPHE X.

Elect. O home-bred pain,
Stroke of perdition that refuses
Concord with the holy Muses!
O burden more than heart can bear,
Disease that no physician's care
Makes sound again!

ANTISTROPHE X.

Orest. So; even so.
No far-sent leech this tetter uses;
A home-bred surgery it chooses.

I the red strife myself pursue,
Pouring this dismal hymn to you,
Ye gods below!
Chorus. Blessed powers, propitious dwelling,
Deep in subterranean darkness,
Hear this pious prayer;
May all trials end in triumph
To the suppliant pair!
Orest. Father, who died not as a king should die,
Give me to rule, as thou didst rule, these halls.
Elect. My supplication hear, thy strong help lend me,
Scathless myself[37] to work Ægisthus' harm.
Orest. Thus of the rightful feasts that soothe the Shades
Thou too shalt taste,[38] and not dishonoured lie,
When savoury fumes mount to our country's dead.
Elect. And I my whole of heritage will offer,
The blithe libations of my marriage feast.
Thy tomb before all tombs I will revere.
Orest. O Earth, relax thy hold, and give my father
To see the fight!
Elect. O Persephassa,* send
The Atridan forth, in beauty clad and strength.
Orest. The bath that drank thy life remember, father.
Elect. The close-drawn meshes of thy death remember.
Orest. The chain, not iron-linked, that bound thee, then
When to the death the kingly game was hunted.
Elect. Then when with treacherous folds they curtained thee
Orest. Wake, father, wake to avenge thy speechless wrongs!
Elect. Lift, father, lift thy dear-loved head sublime!
Orest. Send justice forth to work the just revenge,
Like quit with like, and harm with harm repay;
Thou wert the conquered then, rise now to conquer.
Elect. And hear this last request, my father, looking
On thy twin chickens nestling by thy tomb;
Pity the daughter, the male seed protect,
Nor let the name revered of ancient Pelops
Be blotted from the Earth! Thou art not dead,
Though housed in Hades, while thy children live,
For children are as echoes that prolong
Their parents' fame; the floating cork are they
That buoyant bear the net deep sunk in the sea.
Hear, father—when we weep, we weep for thee,
And, saving us, thou savest thine own honour.

* Proserpine.

Chorus. Well spoken both:[39] and worthily fall the tears
On this dear tomb, too long without them. Now,
If to the deed thy purpose thou hast buckled,
Orestes, try what speed the gods may give thee.[40]
Orest. I'll do the deed. Meanwhile not idly this
I ask of thee—what moved her soul to send
These late libations, limping remedy
For wounds that cannot heal? A sorry grace
To feed the senseless dead with sacrifice,
When we have killed the living. What she means
I scarce may guess, but the amend is less
Than the offence. All ocean poured in offering
For the warm life-drops of one innocent man
Is labour lost. Old truth thus speaks to all.
How was it?
Chorus. That I well may tell, for I
Was with her. Hideous dreams did haunt her sleep;
Night-wandering terrors scared her godless breast,
That she did send these gifts to soothe the Shades.
Orest. What saw she in her dream?
Chorus. She dreamt, she said,
She had brought forth a serpent.
Orest. A serpent, say'st thou?
Chorus. Ay! and the dragon birth portentous moved,
All swaddled like a boy.
Orest. Eager for food, doubtless, the new-born monster?
Chorus. The nurturing nipple herself did fearless bare.
Orest. How then? escaped the nipple from the bite?
Chorus. The gouted blood did taint the milk, that flowed
From the wounded paps.
Orest. No idle dream was this.
And he who sent it was my father.
Chorus. Then
She from her sleep up started, and cried out,
And many lamps, whose splendour night had blinded,
Rushed forth, to wait upon their mistress' word.
Straightway she sends us with funereal gifts,
A medicinal charm, if medicine be
For griefs like hers!
Orest. Now hear me, Earth profound,
And my dear father's tomb, that so this dream
May find in me completion! Thus I read it—
As left the snake the womb that once hid me,

And in the clothes was swathed that once swathed me,
And as it sucked the breast that suckled me,
And mingled blood with milk once sucked by me,
And as she groaned with horror at the sight,
Thus it beseems who bore a monstrous birth
No common death to die. I am the serpent
Shall bite her breast. It is a truthful dream.
My seer be thou. Say have I read it well?

Chorus. Bravely. Now, for the rest, thy friends instruct
What things to do, and what things to refrain.

Orest. 'Tis said in few. Electra, go within,
And keep my counsels in wise secrecy;
For, as they killed an honourable man
Deceitfully, by cunning and deceit
Themselves shall find the halter. Thus Apollo,
A prophet never known to lie, foretold.
Myself will come, like a wayfaring man
Accoutred, guest and spear-guest of this house,*
With Pylades, my friend, to the court gates.
We both will speak with a Parnassian voice,
Aping the Phocian tongue. If then it chance
(As seems most like, for this whole house with ills
Is sheer possessed)[41] that with a welcome greeting
No servant shall receive us, we will wait
Till some one pass, and for their churlish ways
Rate them thus sharply. "Sirs, why dare ye shut
Inhospitable doors against the stranger,[42]
Making Ægisthus sin against the gods?"
When thus I pass the threshold of his courts,
And see him sitting on my father's throne,
When he shall scan me face to face, and seek
To hear my tale; ere he may say the word,
Whence is the stranger? I will lay him dead,
Dressing him trimly o'er with points of steel.
The Fury thus, not scanted of her banquet,
Shall drink unmingled blood from Pelops' veins,
The third and crowning cup.[43] Now, sister, see to 't
That all within be ordered, as shall serve
My end most fitly. Ye, when ye shall speak,
Speak words of happy omen; teach your tongue
Both to be silent, and to speak in season.
For what remains, his present aid I ask,
Who laid on my poor wits this bloody task.[44] [*Exe*

* See Note 64 to Agamemnon.

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

Earth breeds a fearful progeny,[45]
To man a hostile band,
With finny monsters teems the sea,
With creeping plagues the land;
And winged portents scour mid-air,
And flaring lightnings fly,
And storms, sublimely coursing, scare
The fields of the silent sky.

ANTISTROPHE I.

But Earth begets no monster dire
Than man's own heart more dreaded,
All-venturing woman's dreadful ire,[46]
When love to woe is wedded.
No mate with mate there gently dwells,
There peace and joy depart,
Where loveless love triumphant swells,
In fearless woman's heart.

STROPHE II.

This the light-witted may not know,
The wise shall understand,
Who hear the tale from age to age,
How Thestios' daughter, wild with rage,[47]
Lighted the fatal brand,
The brand that burned with conscious flashes
At the cry of her new-born son;
And, when the brand had burned to ashes,
His measured course was run.

ANTISTROPHE II.

And yet a tale of bloody love
From hoary eld I know,
How Scylla gay, in gold arrayed,[48]
The gift of Minos old, betrayed
Her father to the foe.
Sleeping all careless as he lay,
She cut the immortal hair,
And Hermes bore his life away,
From the bold and blushless fair.

STROPHE III.

Ah me! not far needs fancy range
For tales of harshest wrong:
Here, even here, damned wedlock thrives,
And lawless loves are strong.
Within these halls, where blazes now
No holy hearth, a bloody vow
Against her liege lord's life
She vowed; and he, the king divine,
Whose look back-drove the bristling line,
Bled by a woman's knife.

ANTISTROPHE III.

O woman! woman! Lemnos saw[49]
Your jealous fountains flow,
And, when the worst of woes is named,
It is a Lemnian woe.
From age to age the infected tale,
Far echoed by a wandering wail,
To East and West shall go;
And honor from the threshold hies,
On which the doom god-spoken lies;[50]
Speak I not wisely so?

STROPHE IV.

Right through the heart shall pierce the blow,
When Justice is the sinner's foe,
With the avenging steel;
In vain with brief success they strove,
Who trampled on the law of Jove,
With unregarding heel.

ANTISTROPHE IV.

Firm is the base of Justice. Fate,
With whetted knife, doth eager wait
At hoary Murder's door;
The Fury, with dark-bosomed ire,
Doth send the son a mission dire,
To clear the parent's score.

Enter ORESTES.

Orest. What, ho! dost hear no knocking? boy! within!
Is none within, boy? ho! dost hear me call

The third time at thy portal? Is Ægisthus
A man, whose ears are deaf to the strangers' cry?
Ser. [*appearing at the door*]. Enough. I hear thee. Who art thou, and whence?
Orest. Tell those within that a poor stranger waits
Before the gate, bearer of weighty news.
Speed thee; night's dusky chariot swoopeth down,
And the dark hour invites the travelling man
To fix his anchor 'neath some friendly roof.
Thy mistress I would see, if here a mistress
Rules, or thy master rather, if a master.
For with a man a man may plainly deal,
But nice regard for the fine feeling ear [51]
Oft mars the teller's tale, when women hear.

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA.

Clytem. Strangers, speak your desire. Whate'er becomes
This house to give is free to you to share.
Hot baths,[52] a couch to soothe your travelled toil,
Blithe welcoming eyes, and gentle tendance; these
I freely give. If aught beyond ye crave,
There's counsel with my lord. I'll speak to him.
Orest. I am a stranger come from Phocian Daulis.
When I, my burden to my back well saddled,
Stood for the road accoutred, lo! a man
To me not known, nor of me knowing more,
But seeing only that my feet were bound
For Argos, thus accosted me (his name,
I learned, was Strophius the Phocian): Stranger,
If Argos be thy purpose, bear this message
From me to whom it touches near. Orestes
Is dead; charge well thy memory with the tale,
And bring me mandate back, if so his friends
Would have him carried to his native home,
Or he with us due sepulture shall find,
A sojourner for ever. A brazen urn
Holds all the remnant of the much-wept man,
The ashes of his clay. Thus Strophius spake:
And if ye are the friends, whom chiefly grief
Pricks for his loss, my mission's done; at least
His parents will be grieved to hear 't.
Elect.[53] Woe's me!
Sheer down we topple from proud height; harsh fate

Is ours to wrestle with. O jealous Curse,
How dost thou eye us fatal from afar,
And with thy well-trimmed bow shoot chiefly there
Where thou wert least suspect! Thou hast me now
A helpless captive lorn, and reft of all
My trustiest friends. Orestes also gone,
Whose feet above the miry slough most sure
Seemed planted! Now our revelry of hope,
The fair account that should have surgeoned woe,
Is audited at nothing![54]

Orest. Would the gods,
Where happy hosts give welcome, I were guest
On a more pleasant tale! The entertained
No greater joy can know than with good news
To recreate his entertainer's ears;
But piety forbade, nor faith allowed
To lop the head of truth.

Clytem. Thou shalt not fare the worse for thy bad news,
Nor be less dear to us. Hadst thou been dumb,
Some other tongue had vented the sad tale.
But ye have travelled weary leagues to-day,
And doubtless need restoring. Take him, boy,
With the attendant sharers of his travel,
To the men's chambers. See them well bestowed,
And do all things as one, that for neglect
Shall give account. Meanwhile, our lord shall know
What fate hath chanced; his wit and mine shall find
What solace may be for these news unkind.

[*Exeunt into the hous*

Chorus. When, O when, shall we, my sisters,
Lift the strong full-throated hymn,
To greet Orestes' triumph? Thou,
O sacred Earth, and verge revered
Of this lofty mound, where sleeps
The kingly helmsman of our State,
Hear thou, and help! prevail the hour
Of suasive wile, and smooth deceit![55]
Herald him Hermes—lead him, thou
The nightly courier of the dead,[56]
Through this black business of the sword!
In sooth the host hath housed a grievous guest;
For see where comes Orestes' nurse, all tears!
Where goest thou, nurse, beyond our gates to walk,
And why walks Grief, an unfee'd page, with thee!

Enter NURSE.

Nurse. My mistress bids me bring Ægisthus quickly,
To see the strangers face to face, that he
May of their sad tale more assurance win
From their own mouths. Herself to us doth show
A murky-visaged grief; but in her eye
Twinkles a secret joy, that time hath brought
The consummation most devoutly wished
By her—to us and Agamemnon's house
Most fatal issue, if these news be true.
Ægisthus, too, with a light heart will hear
These Phocian tidings. O wretched me! what weight
Of mingled woes from sire to son bequeathed,
Have the gods burdened us withal! Myself,
How many griefs have shaken my old heart;
But this o'ertops them all! The rest I bore,
As best I might, with patience: but Orestes,
My own dear boy, my daily, hourly care,
Whom from his mother's womb these breasts did suckle—
How often did I rise o' nights, and walked
From room to room, to soothe his baby cries;
But all my nursing now, and all my cares
Fall fruitless. 'Tis a pithless thing a child,
No forest whelp so helpless; one must even
Wait on its humour, as the hour may bring.
No voice it has to speak its fitful wants,
When hunger, thirst, or Nature's need commands.
The infant's belly asks no counsel. I
Was a wise prophetess to all his wants,
Though sometimes false, as others are. I was
Nurse to the child, and fuller to its clothes,
And both to one sad end. Alack the day!
This double trade with little fruit I plied,
What time I nursed Orestes for his father;
For he is dead, and I must live to hear it.
But I must go, and glad his heart, who lives
Plague of this house, with news that make me weep.

Chorus. What say'st thou, Nurse? *how* shall thy master come?

Nurse. *How* say'st thou? how shall I receive the question?

Chorus. Alone, I mean, or with his guards?

Nurse. She says
His spearmen shall attend him.

Chorus. Not so, Nurse!
If thou dost hate our most hate-worthy master,
Tell him to come alone, without delay,
To hear glad tidings with exulting heart.
The bearer of a tale can make it wear
What face he pleases.[57]
Nurse. Well! if thou mean'st well,
Perhaps—
Chorus. Perhaps that Jove may make the breeze
Yet veer to us.
Nurse. How so? Our only hope,
Orestes, is no more.
Chorus. Softly, good Nurse;
Thou art an evil prophet, if thou say'st so.
Nurse. How? hast thou news to a different tune?
Chorus. Go! go
Mind thine own business, and the gods will do
What thing they will do.
Nurse. Well! I'll do thy bidding!
The gods lead all things to a fair conclusion!

CHORAL HYMN.[58]

STROPHE I.

O thou, o'er all Olympian gods that be,
Supremely swaying,
With words of wisdom, when I pray to thee,
Inspire my praying.
We can but pray; to do, O Jove, is thine,
Thou great director;
Of him within, who works thy will divine,
Be thou protector!
Him raise, the orphaned son whom thou dost see
In sheer prostration;
Twofold and threefold he shall find from thee
Just compensation.

ANTISTROPHE I.

But hard the toil. Yoked to the car of Fate,
When harshly driven,
O rein him thou! his goaded speed abate
Wisely from Heaven!
Jove tempers all, steadies all things that reel;
When wildly swerveth

From the safe line life's burning chariot wheel,
His hand preserveth.
Ye gods, that guard these gold-stored halls, this day
Receive the claimant,
Who comes, that old Wrong to young Right may pay
A purple payment.

STROPHE II.

Blood begets blood; but, when this blow shall fall,
O thou, whose dwelling
Is Delphi's fuming throat, may this be all!
Of red blood, welling
From guilty veins, enough. Henceforth may joy
Look from the eyes of the Atridan boy,
Discerning clearly
From his ancestral halls the clouds unrolled,
That hung so drearly.

ANTISTROPHE II.

And thou, O Maia's son,* fair breezes blow,
The full sail swelling!
Cunning art thou through murky ways to go,
To Death's dim dwelling;
Dark are the doings of the gods; and we,
When they are clearest shown, but dimly see;
Yet faith will follow
Where Hermes leads, the leader of the dead,
And thou, Apollo.

EPODE.

Crown ye the deed; then will I freely pour
The blithe libation,
And, with pure offerings, cleanse the Atridan floor
From desecration!
Then with my prosperous hymn the lyre shall blend
Its kindly chorus,
And Argos shall be glad, and every friend
Rejoice before us!
Gird thee with manhood, boy; though hard to do,
It is thy father's work; to him be true.
And, when she cries—*Son, wilt thou kill thy* Mother?
Cry—Father, Father! and with that name smother

* Hermes or Mercury. See Notes 55 and 56 above.

The rising ruth. As Perseus, when he slew
The stony Dread,* was stony-hearted, do
Thy mission stoutly;
For him below, and her above,† pursue
This work devoutly.
The gods by thee, in righteous judgment, show
Their grace untender!
Thou to the man, that dealt the deathful blow,
Like death shalt render.

Enter ÆGISTHUS.

Ægis. Not uninvited come I, having heard
A rumour strange, by certain strangers brought,
No pleasant tale—Orestes' death. In sooth,
A heavy fear-distilling sorrow this,
More than a house may bear, whose wounds yet bleed,
And ulcerate from the fangs of fate. But say,
Is this a fact that looks us in the face,
Or startling words of woman's fears begotten,
That shoot like meteors through the air, and die?
What proof, ye maids, what proof?
Chorus. Our ears have heard
But go within; thyself shalt see the man;
Try well the teller, e'er thou trust the tale.
Ægis. I'll scan him well, and prove him close, if he
Himself was at the death, or but repeat
From blind report the news another told.
It will go hard, if idle breath cheat me.
My eyes are in my head, and I can see.
[*Exit into the hou*

Chorus. Jove! great Jove! What shall I say?
How with pious fervour pray,
That from thee the answer fair
Be wafted to my friendly prayer?
Now the keen-edged axe shall strike,
With a life-destroying blow;
Now, or, plunged in deep perdition,
Agamemnon's house sinks low,
Or the hearth with hope this day
Shall blaze, through all the ransomed halls,
And the son his father's wealth
Shall win, and with his sceptre sway.

* The Gorgon Medusa. † Agamemnon and Electra.

In the bloody combat fresh,
He shall risk it, one with two;
Hand to hand the fight shall be.
Godlike son of Agamemnon,
Jove give strength to thee!

Ægis. [*from within*]. Ah me! I fall. Ah! Ah!

Chorus. Hear'st thou that cry? How is't? Whose was that groan?
Let's go aside, the deed being done, that we
Seem not partakers of the bloody work.[59]
'Tis ended now.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Woe's me! my murdered master!
Thrice woeful deed! Ægisthus lives no more.
Open the women's gates! uncase the bolts!
Were needed here a Titan's strength—though that
Would nothing boot the dead. Ho! hillo! ho!
Are all here deaf? or do I babble breath
In sleepers' ears? Where, where is Clytemnestra?
What keeps my mistress? On a razor's edge
Her fate now lies; the blow's already poised,
That falls on her too—nor unjustly falls.

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA.

Clytem. Well! what's the matter? why this clamorous cry?

Serv. He, who was dead, has slain the quick. 'Tis so.

Clytem. Ha! Thou speak'st riddles; but I understand thee.
We die by guile, as guilefully we slew.
Bring me an axe! an axe to kill a man!
Quickly!—or conqueror or conquered, I
Will fight it out. To this 'tis come at last.

Enter ORESTES, *dragging in the dead body of* ÆGISTHUS; *with him* PYLADES.

Orest. Thee next I seek. For him, he hath enough.

Clytem. Ah me! my lord, my loved Ægisthus dead!

Orest. Dost love this man? then thou shalt sleep with him,
In the same tomb. He was thy bedmate living,
Be thou his comrade, dead.

Clytem. Hold thee, my son!
Look on this breast, to which with slumbrous eyes
Thou oft hast clung, the while thy baby gum
Sucked the nutritious milk.

Orest. What say'st thou, Pylades?
Shall I curtail the work, and spare my mother?
Pyl. Bethink thee well; the Loxian oracles,
Thy sure-pledged vows, where are they, if she live?
Make every man thy foe, but fear the gods.
Orest. Thy voice shall rule in this; thou judgest wisely.
Follow this man; here, side by side with him,
I'll butcher thee. Seemed he a fairer man
Than was my father when my father lived?
Sleep thou, where he sleeps; him thou lovest well,
And whom thou chiefly shouldst have loved thou hatedst.
Clytem. I nursed thy childhood, and in peace would die.[60]
Orest. Spare thee to live with me—my father's murderer?
Clytem. Not I; say rather Fate ordained his death.
Orest. The self-same Fate ordains thee now to die.
Clytem. My curse beware, the mother's curse that bore thee.
Orest. That cast me homeless from my father's house.
Clytem. Nay; to a friendly house I lent thee, boy.
Orest. Being free-born, I like a slave was sold.
Clytem. I trafficked not with thee. I gat no gold.
Orest. Worse—worse than gold—a thing too foul to name!
Clytem. Name all my faults; but had thy father none?
Orest. Thou art a woman sitting in thy chamber.[61]
Judge not the man that goes abroad, and labours.
Clytem. Hard was my lot, my child, alone, uncherished.
Orest. Alone by the fire, while for thy gentle ease
The husband toiled.
Clytem. Thou wilt not kill me, son?
Orest. I kill thee not. Thyself dost kill thyself.
Clytem. Beware thy mother's anger-whetted hounds.*
Orest. My father's hounds have hunted me to thee.
Clytem. The stone that sepulchres the dead art thou,
And I the tear on't.
Orest. Cease: I voyaged here,
With a fair breeze; my father's murder brought me.
Clytem. Ah me! I nursed a serpent on my breast.
Orest.[62] Thou hadst a prophet in thy dream, last night;
And since thou kill'd the man thou shouldst have spared,
The man, that now should spare thee, can but kill.
[*He drives her into the house, and there murders h*
Chorus. There's food for sorrow here; but rather, since
Orestes could not choose but scale the height

* The Furies.—See next piece.

Of bloody enterprise, our prayer is this:
That he, the eye of this great house, may live.[63]

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

Hall of old Priam, with sorrow unbearable,
Vengeance hath come on the Argive thy foe;
A pair of grim lions, a double Mars terrible,[64]
Comes to his palace, that levelled thee low.
Chanced hath the doom of the guilty precisely,
Even as Phœbus foretold it, and wisely
Where the god pointed, was levelled the blow.
Lift up the hymn of rejoicing; the lecherous,
Sin-laden tyrant shall lord it no more;
No more shall the mistress so bloody and treacherous
Lavish the plundered Pelopidan store.

STROPHE II.

Sore chastisement[65] came on the doomed and devoted,
With dark-brooding purpose and fair-smiling show;
And the daughter of Jove the eternal was noted,
Guiding the hand that inflicted the blow—
Bright Justice, of Jove, the Olympian daughter;
But blasted they fell with the breath of her slaughter
Whose deeds of injustice made Justice their foe.
Her from his shrine sent the rock-throned Apollo,[66]
The will of her high-purposed sire to obey,
The track of the blood-stained remorseless to follow,
Winged with sure death, though she lag by the way.

EPODE.

Ye rulers on Earth, fear the rulers in Heaven,
No aid by the gods to the froward is given;
For the bonds of our thraldom asunder are riven,
And the day dawns clear.
Lift up your heads; from prostration untimely
Ye halls of the mighty be lifted sublimely!
All-perfecting Time shall bring swift restitution,
And cleanse the hearth pure from the gory pollution,
Now the day dawns clear.
And blithely shall welcome them Fortune the fairest,[67]
The brother and sister, with omens the rarest;
Each friend of this house show the warm love thou bearest,
Now the day dawns clear!

Enter ORESTES, *with the body of* CLYTEMNESTRA.

Orest. Behold this tyrant pair, my father's murderers,
Usurpers of this land, and of this house
Destroyers. They this throne did use in pride,
And now in love, as whoso looks may guess,
They lie together, all their vows fulfilled.
Death to my hapless father, and to lie
Themselves on a common bier—this was their vow;
And they have vowed it well. Behold these toils,
Wherewith they worked destruction to my father,
Chained his free feet, and manacled his hands.
There—spread it forth—approach—peruse it nicely.
This mortal vest, that so the father—not
My father, but the Sun that fathers all
With light[68]—may see what godless deed was done
Here by my mother. Let him witness duly,
That not unjustly I have spilt this blood—
My mother's; for Ægisthus recks me not;
As an adulterer should, he died: but she,
That did devise such foul detested wrong
Against the lord, to whom beneath her zone
She bore a burden, once so valued, now
A weight that damns her; what was she?—a viper
Or a torpedo—that with biteless touch
Strikes numb who handles.[69] Harsh the smoothest phra
To name the bold unrighteous will she used.
And for this fowler's net—this snare—this trap—
This cloth to wrap the dead[70]—this veil to curtain
A bloody bath—teach me a name for it!
Such murderous toils the ruffians use, who spill
Their neighbour's blood, that they may seize his gold,
And warm their heart with plenty not their own.
Lodge no such mate with me! Sooner may I
Live by high Heaven accursed, and childless die.

Chorus. A sorry work—alas! alas!
A dismal death she found.
Nor sorrow quite from man may pass
That lives above the ground.

Orest. A speaking proof! Behold, Ægisthus' sword
Hath left its witness on this robe; the time
Hath paled the murtherous spot, but where it was
The sumptuous stole hath lost its radiant dye.

Alas! I know not, when mine eyes behold
This father-murdering web, if I should own
Joy lord, or grief. Let grief prevail. I grieve
Our crimes, our woes, our generation doomed,
Our tearful trophies blazoned with a curse.

Chorus. The gods so will that, soon or late,
Each mortal taste of sorrow;
A frown to-day from surly Fate,
A biting blast to-morrow.

Orest. Others 'twixt hope and fear may sway, my fate
Is fixed and scapeless.[71] Like a charioteer,
Dragged from his course by steeds that spurned the rein,
Thoughts past control usurp me. Terror lifts,
Even now, the prelude to her savage hymn,
Within my heart exultant. But, while yet
My sober mind remains, witness ye all
My friends, this solemn abjuration! Not
Unjustly, when I slew, I slew my mother—
That mother, with my father's blood polluted,
Of every god abhorred. And I protest
The god that charmed me to the daring point
Was Loxias, with his Pythian oracles,
Pledging me blameless, this harsh work once done,
Not done, foredooming what I will not say;
All thoughts most horrible undershoot the mark.
And now behold me, as a suppliant goes,
With soft-wreathed wool, and precatory branch,[72]
Addressed for Delphi, the firm-seated shrine
Of Loxias, navel of earth, where burns the flame
Of fire immortal named.[73] For I must flee
This kindred blood, and hie me where the god
Forespoke me refuge. Once again I call
On you, and Argive men of every time,
To witness my great griefs. I go an exile
From this dear soil. Living, or dead, I leave
These words, the one sad memory of my name.

Chorus. Thou hast done well; yoke not thy mouth this day
To evil words. Thou art the liberator
Of universal Argos, justly greeted,
Who from the dragon pair the head hath lopped.

[*The* FURIES *appear in the background.*

Orest. Ah, me! see there! like Gorgons! look! look there!

All dusky-vested, and their locks entwined
With knotted snakes. Away! I may not stay.

Chorus. O son, loved of thy sire, be calm, nor let
Vain phantoms fret thy soul, in triumph's hour.

Orest. These are no phantoms, but substantial horrors;
Too like themselves they show, the infernal hounds
Sent from my mother!

Chorus. 'Tis the fresh-gouted blood
Upon thy hand, that breeds thy brain's distraction.

Orest. Ha! how they swarm! Apollo! more—yet more!
And from their fell eyes droppeth murderous gore.

Chorus. There is atonement.[74] Touch but Loxias' altar,
And he from bloody stain shall wash thee clean.

Orest. Ye see them not. I see them.[75] There!—Away!
The hell-hounds hunt me: here I may not stay.

Chorus. Nay, but with blessing go. From fatal harm
Guard thee the god whose eyes in love behold thee![76]
Blown hath now the third harsh tempest,
O'er the proud Atridan palace,
Floods of family woe!
First thy damned feast, Thyestes,
On thy children's flesh abhorrent;
Then the kingly man's prostration,
And thy warlike pride, Achaia,
Butchered in a bath;
Now he, too, our greeted Saviour
Red with this new woe!
When shall Fate's stern work be ended,
When shall cease the boisterous vengeance,
Hushed in slumbers low?

THE EUMENIDES

A LYRICO-DRAMATIC SPECTACLE

ἄλγεα
Πολλὰ μάλ' ὅσσα τε μητρὸς Ἐρινύες ἐκτελέουσιν.
Odyssey xi. 289.

My solitude is solitude no more,
But peopled with the Furies.
BYRON.

PERSONS

The PYTHONESS of the Temple of Apollo in Delphi.

APOLLO.

HERMES (Mute).

The SHADE of CLYTEMNESTRA.

CHORUS OF FURIES.

PALLAS ATHENA.

JUDGES of the Court of Areopagus (Mute).

CONVOY OF THE FURIES.

SCENE—*First at Delphi in the Temple of Apollo; then on the Hill of Mars, Athens.*

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

THOUGH the ancient Greek religion, there can be no question, was too much the creation of mere imagination, and tended rather to cultivate a delicate sense of beauty than to strike the soul with a severe reverence before the awful majesty of the moral law, yet it is no less certain that to look upon it as altogether addressed to our sensuous emotions, however convenient for a certain shallow school of theology, would lead the calm inquirer after moral truth far away from the right track. As among the gods that rule over the elements of the physical world, Jove, according to the Homeric creed, asserts a high supremacy, which restrains the liberty of the celestial aristocracy from running into lawless licence and confusion; so the wild and wanton ebullitions of human passion, over which a Bacchus, a Venus, and a Mars preside, are not free from the constant control of a righteous Jove, and the sacred terror of a retributive Erinnys. The great lesson of a moral government, and a secret order of justice pervading the apparent confusion of the system of things of which we are a part, is sufficiently obvious in the whole structure of the two great Homeric poems; but if it exists in the midst of that sunny luxuriance of popular fancy as a felt atmosphere, it is planted by Æschylus, the thoughtful lyrist of a later age, on a visible elevation, whence, as from a natural pulpit, enveloped with dark clouds, or from a Heathen Sinai, involved in fearful thunders and lightnings, it trumpets forth its warnings, and hurls its bolts of flaming denunciation against Sin. The reader, who has gone through the two preceding pieces of this remarkable trilogy, without discovering this their deep moral significance, has read to little purpose; but it is here, in the concluding piece, that the grand doctrine of the moral government of the world is most formally enunciated; it is in the person of the Furies that the wrathful indignation of Jove against the violators of the moral law manifests itself, in the full panoply of terror, and stands out as the stern Avatar of an inexorable Justice. Here, therefore, if we will understand the moral seriousness, of which the gay Hellenic Polytheism was not without its background, let us fix our gaze. If the principles of "immutable morality," of which our great English Platonist talks so comprehensively, are to be found anywhere, they are to be found here.

The Furies (or the Εὐμενίδες, *i.e.* the *Gracious-minded*, as they are called by a delicate euphemism) are generally looked upon as the impersonations of an evil conscience, the incarnated scourges of self-reproach. In this view there is no essential error; but it may be beneficial, in entering on the perusal of the present piece, to place before the modern reader more literally the true Homeric idea of these awful Powers. In the Iliad and Odyssey, frequent mention is made of the Erinnyes; and from the circumstances, in which their names occur, in various passages of these poems, there can be no doubt that we are to view them primarily as the impersonation of an imprecation or curse, which a person, whose natural rights have been grossly violated, pronounces on the person, by whom this violation comes.* Thus the father of Phoenix (Il. ix. 453), being offended by the conduct of his son in relation to one of his concubines, "loads him with frequent curses, and invokes the hated Furies"—

Πολλὰ κατηρατο, στυγερὰς δ' ἐπίκεκλετ Ερινῦς,

and "the gods," it is added, "gave accomplishment to his curse, the subterranean Jove, and the awful Persephone." In the same book we find, in the narration of the war, between the Curetes and the Ætolians, about Calydon, how Althaea, the mother of Meleager, being offended with her son on account of his having slain her brother, cursed him, and invoked Pluto and Proserpine that he might die, and

Her the Fury that walketh in darkness,
Heard from Erebus' depths, with a heart that knoweth no mercy.

Both these instances relate to offences committed against the revered character of a parent; but the elder brother also has his Erinnys.—(Il. xv. 204), and even the houseless beggar—(Od. xvii. 575), and, more than all, he to whose prejudice the sacred obligation of truth and honour have been set at nought by the perjured swearer—

Mighty Jove, be thou my witness, Jove of gods supremest, best,
Earth, and Sun, and Furies dread, that underneath the ground avenge
Whoso speaks and sweareth falsely—

says Agamemnon—(Il. xix. 257)—in restoring the intact Briseis to Achilles.

Thus, according to Homer's idea, wherever there is a cry of righteous indignation, rising up to Heaven from the breast of an injured person, there may be a Fury or Furies; for they are not

* This original germ of the Furies is mentioned frequently in these plays, as πολυκρατεῖς ἀραὶ φθιμένων, *Fell Curses of the Dead*, in the Choephoræ, p. 111 above. See also the words of Clytemnestra, *My curse beware*, p. 126 above.

limited or defined in any way as to number. It is not, however, on every petty occasion of common offence that these dread ministers of divine vengeance appear. Only, when deeds of a deeper darkness are done, do these daughters of primeval Night (for so Æschylus symbolises their pedigree) issue forth from their subterranean caverns. There is something volcanic in their indignation, whose eruption is too terrible to be common. They chiefly frequent the paths, that are dabbled with blood. A murdered father, or a murdered mother especially, were never known to appeal to them in vain, even though Jove's own prophet, Apollo, add his sanction to the deed. An Orestes may not hope to escape the bloody chase, which the "winged hounds," invoked by a murdered Clytemnestra, are eager to prepare—the sacred precincts of an oracular Delphi may not repel their intrusion—the scent of blood "laughs in their nostrils," and they will not be cheated of their game. Only one greatest goddess, in whose hands are the keys of her father's armoury of thunder, may withstand the full rush of these vindictive powers. Only Pallas Athena, with her panoply of Olympian strength, and her divine wisdom of reconciliation can bid them be pacified.

In order to understand thoroughly the situation of the matricide Orestes, in the present play, we must consider further the ancient doctrine of pollution attaching to an act of murder, and the consequent necessity of purification to the offender. The nature of this is distinctly set forth by Orestes himself in a reply to his sister Iphigenia, put into his mouth by Euripides. "Loxias," he says, "first sent me to Athens, and

> There first arrived, no host would entertain me,
> As being hated of the immortal gods,
> And some, who pitied me, before me placed
> Cold entertainment on a separate board;
> Beneath the same roof though I lodged with them,
> No interchange of living voice I knew,
> But sat apart and ate my food alone."
>
> IPHIG. TAUR. 954.

Like an unclean leper among the Jews, the man polluted with human blood wandered from land to land, as with a Cain's mark upon his brow, and every fellow-being shrank from his touch as from a living plague.

> "For wisely thus our ancestors ordained,
> That the blood-tainted man should know no joy
> From sight of fellow-mortal or from touch,
> But with an horrid sanctitude protected
> Range the wide earth an exile."
>
> EURIP. OREST. 512.

Under the ban of such a social excommunication as this, the first act of readmission into the fraternity of human society was performed by the sprinkling of swine's blood on the exile, a ceremony described particularly in the following passage of Apollonius Rhodius, where Jason and Medea are purified by Circe from the taint of the murder of Absyrtus :—

"First to free them from the taint of murder not to be recalled,
She above them stretched the suckling of a sow whose teats distilled
The juice that flows when birth is recent ; this she cut across the throat,
And with the crimson blood outflowing dashed the tainted suppliants' hands.
Then with other pure libations she allayed the harm, invoking
Jove that hears the supplication of the fugitive stained with blood."
ARGON. IV. 704–9.

The other "pure libations" here mentioned include specially water, of which particular mention is made in the legend of Alcmæon, which bears a remarkable resemblance to that of Orestes, and in which it is in the sacred stream of the Achelous alone that purification is at length found, from the deeply-engrained guilt of matricide. —(Apollodor, Lib. III., c. 7.) All this, however, availed only to remove the unhallowed taint, with which human blood had defiled the murderer. It was necessary, further, that he should be tried before a competent court, and formally acquitted, as having performed every atonement and given every satisfaction that the nature of the case required. According to the consuetudinary law of Athens, there were various courts in which different cases of murder and manslaughter were tried ; but of all the courts that held solemn judgment on shed blood, none was more venerable in its origin, or more weighty in its authority, than the famous court of the Areopagus ; and here it is, accordingly, that, after being wearied out by the sleepless chase of his relentless pursuers, Orestes, with the advice and under the protection of Apollo, arrives to gain peace to his soul by a final verdict of acquittal from the sage elders of Athens, acting by the authority and with the direction of their wise patron-goddess, Athena.

The connection of Athena and the Areopagus with the Orestean legend gives to the present play a local interest and a patriotic hue which the want is too often felt in the existing remains of the Attic tragedy. But Athena and the grave seniors of the hill of Ares are not the only celestial personages here, in whom an Athenian audience would find a living interest. The Furies themselves enjoyed a special reverence in the capital of Athens, under the title of Σεμναὶ θεαι, or the *dread goddesses ;* and the principal seat of this worship, whether by a happy conjunction or a wise choice, was situated on

the north-east side (looking towards the Acropolis) of that very hill of the war god, where the venerable court that bore his name held its solemn sessions on those crimes, which it was the principal function of the Furies to avenge. Up to the present hour, the curious traveller through the wreck of Athenian grandeur sees pointed out the black rift of the rock into which the awful virgins, after accepting the pacification of Athena, are reported to have descended into their subterranean homes ; * and it is with this very descent, amid flaming torch-light and solemn hymns, that the great tragedian, mingling peace with fear, closes worthily the train of startling superhuman terrors which this drama exhibits.

But Æschylus is not a patriot only, and a pious worshipper of his country's gods in this play, he is also, to some small extent at least, manifestly a politician. The main feature of the constitutional history of Athens in the period immediately following the great Persian war, to which period our trilogy belongs, was the enlargement and the systematic completion of those democratic forms, of which the timocratic legislation of Solon, about a century and a-half before, had planted the first germs. Of these changes, Pericles, the man above all others who knew both to understand and to control his age, was the chief promoter ; and in a policy whose main tendency was the substitution of a numerous popular for a narrow professional control of public business, it could not fail to be a main feature, that the authority of the judges of the old aristocratic courts was curtailed in favour of those bodies of paid jurymen, the institution of which is specially attributed to Pericles and his coadjutor Ephialtes.† Whether these changes were politic or not, in the large sense of that word, need not be inquired here ; Mr. Grote has done much to lengthen the focus of those short-sighted national spectacles, through which the English eye has been accustomed to view the classic democracies ; but let it be that Pericles kept within the bounds of a wise liberty in giving a fair and a large trial to the action of democratic principles at that time and place ; or let it be, on the other hand, that he overstepped the line

> "Which whoso passes, or who reaches not,
> Misses the mark of right"—

in either case, where decision was so difficult, and discretion so delicate, no one can accuse the thoughtful tragic poet of a stolid conservatism, when he comes forward, in this play, as the advocate of

* Wordsworth's "Athens and Attica," London, 1836, c. 11.

† "Καὶ τὴν μὲν ἐν Ἀρείῳ πάγῳ βουλὴν Ἐφιάλτης ἐκόλουσε καὶ Περικλῆς, τὰ δὲ δικαστήρια μισθοφόρα κατέστησε Περικλῆς."—ARISTOTLE, Pol. II, 9. 3.

the only court of high jurisdiction in Athens, now left unshaken by the great surge of those popular billows, that were yet swelling everywhere with the eager inspiration of Marathon and Salamis.* The court of Areopagus was not now, since the legislation of Solon, and the further democratic movement of Cleisthenes, in any invidious or exclusive sense an aristocratic assembly, such as the close corporations of the old Roman aristocracy before the series of popular changes introduced by Licinius Stolo; it was a council, in fact, altogether without that family and hereditary element, in which the principal offence of aristocracy has always lain; its members were composed entirely (not recruited merely like our House of Lords) of those superior magistrates—archons annually elected by the people—who had retired from office. To magnify the authority of such a body, and maintain intact the few privileges that had now been left it, was, when an obvious opportunity offered, not only excusable in a great national tragedian, but imperative. One thing his political attitude in this matter certainly proves, that he was not a vulgar hunter after popularity, delighting to swell to the point of insane exaggeration the cry of the hour, but one of those men of high purpose, who prove a greater strength of patriotism by stemming the popular stream, than by swimming with it.

Besides the championship of the Court of the Areopagus, there is another political element in this rich drama, which, though of less consequence, must not be omitted. No sooner had the Persian invaders been fairly driven back from the Hellenic shore, than that old spirit of narrow local jealousy, which was the worm at the heart of Grecian political existence, broke out with renewed vigour, and gave ominous indications in the untoward affair of Tanagra, of that terrible collision which shook the two great rival powers a few years afterwards in the famous Peloponnesian war. Sparta and Athens, opposed as they were by race, by geographical position, and by political character, after some public attempts at co-operation, in which Cimon was the principal actor, shrunk back, as in quiet preparation for the great trial of strength, into a state of isolated antagonism. But, though open hostility was deferred, wise precaution could not sleep; and, accordingly, we find the Athenians, about this time, anxious to secure a base of operations, so to speak, against Sparta in the Peloponnesus, by entering into an alliance with Argos. As a genuine Athenian, Æschylus, whatever his political feelings might be towards Cimon and the Spartan party, could not but look with

* "Τῆς ναυαρχίας γὰρ ἐν τοῖς Μηδικοῖς ὁ δῆμος αἴτιος γενόμενος ἐφρονηματίσθη."—ARISTOTLE, *ibid.*

pleasure on the additional strength which this Argive connection gave to Athens in the general council of Greece; and, accordingly, he dexterously takes advantage of the circumstance of Orestes being an Argive, to trace back the now historical union of the two countries to a period where Fancy is free to add what links she pleases to the brittle bonds of international association.

Such is a rapid sketch of the principal religious and political relations, some notion of which is necessary to enable the general English reader to enter with sympathy on the perusal of the very powerful and singular drama of the Eumenides. The professional student, of course, will not content himself with what he finds here, but will seek for complete satisfaction in the luminous pages of Thirlwall and Grote—in the learned articles of Dr. Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities, in the notes of Schoemann, and, above all, in the rare Dissertations of Ottfried Müller, accompanying his edition of the Eumenides—a work which I have read once and again with mingled admiration and delight—from which I have necessarily drawn with no stinted hand in my endeavours to comprehend the Orestean trilogy for myself, and to make it comprehensible to others; and which I most earnestly recommend to all classical students as a pattern-specimen of erudite architecture raised by the hand of a master, from whom, even in his points of most baseless speculation (as what German is without such?), more is to be learned than from the triple-fanged certainties of vulgar commentators.

THE EUMENIDES

SCENE.—*In front of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi.*

The Pythoness. Old Earth, primeval prophetess, I first
With these my prayers invoke; and Themis[1] next,
Who doth her mother's throne and temple both
Inherit, as the legend runs; and third
In lot's due course, another Earth-born maid
The unforced homage of the land received,
Titanian Phœbe;* she in natal gift
With her own name her hoary right bequeathed
To Phœbus: he from rocky Delos' lake[2]
To Attica's ship-cruised bays was wafted, whence
He in Parnassus fixed his sure abode.
Hither with pious escort they attend him:
The Sons of Vulcan pioneer his path,[3]
Smoothing the rugged desert where he comes:
The thronging people own him, and king Delphos,
The land's high helmsman, flings his portals wide.
Jove with divinest skill his heart inspires,
And now the fourth on this dread seat enthroned
Sits Loxias,† prophet of his father Jove.[4]
These be the gods, whom chiefly I invoke:
But thee, likewise, who 'fore this temple dwellest,[5]
Pallas, I pray, and you, ye Nymphs that love
The hollow Corycian rock,[6] the frequent haunt
Of pleasant birds, the home of awful gods.
Thee, Bromius, too, I worship,[7] not unweeting
How, led by thee, the furious Thyads rushed
To seize the godless Pentheus,[8] ev'n as a hare
Is dogged to death. And you, the fountains pure
Of Pleistus,‡ and Poseidon's§ mighty power[9]
I pray, and Jove most high, that crowns all things
With consummation. These the gods that lead me
To the prophetic seat, and may they grant me
Best-omened entrance; may consulting Greeks,
If any be, by custom'd lot approach;

* The progeny of Earth and Heaven were called Titans, among whom Phœbe is numbered by Hesiod.—Theog. 136.
† Apollo.
‡ One of the waters that descend from Parnassus.
§ Neptune.

For as the gods my bosom stir, I pour
The fateful answer.
[*She goes into the Temple, but suddenly returns.*
O horrid tale to tell! O sight to see
Most horrible! that drives me from the halls
Of Loxias, so that I nor stand nor run,
But, like a beast fourfooted stumble on,
Losing the gait and station of my kind,
A gray-haired woman, weaker than a child![10]
Up to the garlanded recess I walked,
And on the navel-stone* behold! a man
With crime polluted to the altar clinging,
And in his bloody hand he held a sword
Dripping with recent murder, and a branch
Of breezy olive, with flocks of fleecy wool
All nicely tipt. Even thus I saw the man;
And stretched before him an unearthly host
Of strangest women, on the sacred seats
Sleeping—not women, but a Gorgon brood,
And worse than Gorgons, or the ravenous crew
That filched the feast of Phineus[11] (such I've seen
In painted terror); but these are wingless, black,
Incarnate horrors, and with breathings dire
Snort unapproachable, and from their eyes
Pestiferous beads of poison they distil.
Such uncouth sisterhood, apparel'd so,[12]
From all affinity of gods or men
Divorced, from me and from the gods be far,
And from all human homes! Nor can the land,
That lends these unblest hags a home, remain
Uncursed by fearful scourges. But the god,
Thrice-potent Loxias himself will ward
His holiest shrine from lawless outrage. Him
Physician, prophet, soothsayer, we call,
Cleansing from guilt the blood-polluted hall. [*Exit.*

The interior of the Delphic Temple is now presented to view. ORESTES *is seen clinging to the navel-stone; the* EUMENIDES *lie sleeping on the seats around. In the background* HERMES *beside* ORESTES. *Enter* APOLLO.

Apollo [*to Orestes*]. Trust me, I'll not betray thee. Far or near,
Thy guardian I, and to thine every foe

* See note to Choephoræ, No. 73.

No gentle god. Thy madded persecutors
Sleep-captured lie: the hideous host is bound.
Primeval virgins, hoary maids, with whom
Nor god, nor man, nor beast hath known communion.
For evil's sake they are: in evil depth
Of rayless Tartarus, underneath the ground,
They dwell, of men and of Olympian gods
Abhorred. But hence! nor faint thy heart, though they
Are mighty to pursue from land to land
O'er measureless tracks, from rolling sea to sea,
And sea-swept cities. A bitter pasture truly
Was thine from Fate;[13] but bear all stoutly. Hie thee
Away to Pallas' city, and embrace
Her ancient image[14] with close-clinging arms.
Just Judges there we will appoint to judge
Thy cause, and with soft-soothing pleas will pluck
The sting from thy offence, and free thee quite
From all thy troubles. Thou know'st that I, the god,
When thou didst strike, myself the blow directed.

Orest. Liege lord Apollo, justice to the gods
Belongs; in justice, O remember me.
Thy power divine assurance gives that thou
Can'st make thy will a deed.

Apollo. Fear nought. Trust me.
[*To Hermes*] And thou, true brother's blood, true father's son,
Hermes, attend, and to this mission gird thee.
Fulfil the happy omen of thy name,
The GUIDE,* and guide this suppliant on his way.
For Jove respects thy function and thy pride,
The prosperous convoy, and the faithful guide.
[*Exit* HERMES, *leading* ORESTES. APOLLO *retires.*

Enter THE SHADE OF CLYTEMNESTRA.

Clytem. Sleeping? All sleeping! Ho! What need of sleepers?
While I roam restless, of my fellow-dead
Dishonoured and reproached, by fault of you,
That when I slew swift vengeance overtook me.
But being slain myself, my avengers sleep
And leave my cause to drift! Hear me, sleepers!
Such taunts I bear, such contumelious gibes,
Yet not one god is touched with wrath to avenge

* πομπαῖος. Of the dead specially, but also of the living: as of Ulysses in the Odyssey, Book X.

My death, who died by matricidal hands.
Behold these wounds![15] look through thy sleep, and see!
Read with thy heart; some things the soul may scan
More clearly, when the sensuous lid hath dropt,
Nor garish day confounds.[16] Full oft have ye
Of my libations sipped the wineless streams,
The soothings of my sober sacrifice,
The silent supper from the solemn altar,
At midnight hour when only ye are worshipped.
But now all this beneath your feet lies trampled.
The man is gone; fled like a hind! he snaps
The meshes of your toils, and makes—O shame!
Your Deity a mark for scoffers' eyes
To wink at! Hear me, ye infernal hags,
Unhoused from hell! For my soul's peace I plead,
Once Clytemnestra famous, now a dream.[17]

[*The* CHORUS *moans.*

Ye moan! the while the man hath fled, and seeks
For help from those that are no friends to me.[18]

[*The* CHORUS *moans again.*

Sleep-bound art thou. Hast thou no bowels for me?
My Furies sleep, and let my murderer flee.

[*The* CHORUS *groans.*

Groaning and sleeping! Up! What work hast thou
To do, but thine own work of sorrow? Rouse thee!

[*The* CHORUS *groans again.*

Sleep and fatigue have sworn a league to bind
The fearful dragon with strong mastery.

Chorus [*with redoubled groans and shrill cries*]. Hold! seize him! seize him! seize there! there! there! hold!

Clytem. Thy dream scents blood; and, like a dog that doth
In dreams pursue the chase, even so dost thou
At phantasms bark and howl. To work! to work!
Let not fatigue o'ermaster thus thy strength,
Nor slumber soothe the sense of sharpest wrong.
Torture thy liver with reproachful thoughts;
Reproaches are the pricks that goad the wise.
Up! blow a blast of bloody breath behind him!
Dry up his marrow with the fiery vengeance!
Follow! give chase! pursue him to the death!

CHORUS,[19] *starting up in hurry and confusion.*

Voice 1. Awake! awake! rouse her as I rouse thee!

Voice 2. Dost sleep? arise! dash drowsy sleep away!
Brave dreams be prelude to brave deed! Ho, sisters!

STROPHE I.

Voice 1. Shame, sisters, shame!
Insult and injury!
Shame, O shame!
Voice 2. Shame on me, too: a bootless, fruitless shame!
Voice 1. Insult and injury,
Sorrow and shame!
Burden unbearable,
Shame! O shame!
Voice 2. The snare hath sprung: flown is the goodly game.
Voice 3. I slept, and when sleeping
He sprang from my keeping;
Shame, O shame!

ANTISTROPHE I.

Voice 1. O son of Jove, in sooth,
If thou wilt hear the truth,
Robber's thy name!
Voice 2. Thou being young dost overleap the old.[20]
Voice 1. A suppliant, godless,
And bloodstained, I see,
And bitter to parents,
Harboured by thee.
Voice 2. Apollo's shrine a mother-murderer's hold!
Voice 3. Apollo rewardeth
Whom Justice discardeth,
And robber's his name!

STROPHE II.

Voice 1. A voice of reproach
Came through my sleeping,
Like a charioteer
With his swift lash sweeping.
Voice 2. Thorough my heart,
Thorough my liver,
Keen as the cold ice
Shot through the river.
Voice 3. Harsh as the headsman,
Ruthless exacter,
When tearless he scourges
The doomed malefactor.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Voice 1. All blushless and bold
The gods that are younger
Would rule o'er the old,
With the right of the stronger.
Voice 2. The Earth's navel-stone
So holy reputed,
All gouted with blood,
With fresh murder polluted,
Behold, O behold!
Voice 3. By the fault of the younger,
The holiest holy
Is holy no longer.

STROPHE III.

Voice 1. Thyself thy hearth with this pollution stained,
Thyself, a prophet, free and unconstrained.
Voice 2. O'er the laws of the gods
Thou hast recklessly ridden,
Dispensing to men
Gifts to mortals forbidden;
Voice 3. Us thou hast reft
Of our name and our glory,
Us and the Fates,
The primeval, the hoary.

ANTISTROPHE III.

Voice 1. I hate the god. Though underneath the ground
He hide my prey, there, too, he shall be found.
Voice 2. I at each shrine
Where the mortal shall bend him,
Will jealously watch,
That no god may defend him.
Voice 3. Go where he will,
A blood-guilty ranger,
Hotly will hound him still
I, the Avenger!

Apollo. Begone! I charge thee, leave these sacred halls
From this prophetic cell avaunt! lest thou
A feathered serpent in thy breast receive,
Shot from my golden bow; and, inly pained,
Thou vomit forth black froth of murdered men,
Belching the clotted slaughter by thy maw
Insatiate sucked. These halls suit not for thee;

But where beheading, eye-out-digging dooms,[21]
Abortions, butcheries, barrenness abound,
Where mutilations, flayings, torturings,
Make wretches groan, on pointed stakes impaled,
There fix your seats; there hold the horrid feasts,
In which your savage hearts exultant revel,
Of gods abominate—maids whose features foul
Speak your foul tempers plainly. Find a home
In some grim lion's den sanguinolent, not
In holy temples which your breath pollutes.
Depart, ye sheep unshepherded, whom none
Of all the gods may own!

Chorus. Liege lord, Apollo,
Ours now to speak, and thine to hear: thyself
Not aided only, but the single cause
Wert thou of all thou blamest.

Apollo. How so? Speak!

Chorus. Thine was the voice that bade him kill his mother.

Apollo. Mine was the voice bade him avenge his father.

Chorus. All reeking red with gore thou didst receive him.

Apollo. Not uninvited to these halls he came.

Chorus. And we come with him. Wheresoe'er he goes,
His convoy we. Our function is to follow.

Apollo. Follow! but from this holy threshold keep
Unholy feet.

Chorus. We, where we must go, go
By virtue of our office.

Apollo. A goodly vaunt!
Your office what?

Chorus. From hearth and home we chase
All mother-murderers.

Apollo. She was murdered here,
That murdered first her husband.[22]

Chorus. Yet should she
By her own body's fruitage have been slain?

Apollo. Thus speaking, ye mispraise the sacred rites
Of matrimonial Hera[23] and of Jove,
Unvalued make fair Aphrodite's grace,
Whence dearest joys to mortal man descend.
The nuptial bed, to man and woman fated,[24]
Hath obligation stronger than an oath,
And Justice guards it. Ye who watch our crimes,
If that loose reins to nuptial sins ye yield,

Offend, and grossly. If the murtherous wife
Escape your sharp-set vengeance, how can ye
Pursue Orestes justly? I can read
No even judgment in your partial scales,
In this more wrathful, and in that more mild.
She who is wise shall judge between us, Pallas.

Chorus. The man is mine already. I will keep him.

Apollo. He's gone; and thou'lt but waste thy toil to follow.

Chorus. Thy words shall not be swords, to cut my honors.

Apollo. Crowned with such honors, I would tear them from me

Chorus. A mighty god beside thy father's throne
Art thou, Apollo. Me this mother's blood
Goads on to hound this culprit to his doom.

Apollo. And I will help this man, champion and save him,
My suppliant, my client; should I not,
Both gods and men would brand the treachery.

The scene changes to the Temple of Pallas in Athens. A considerable interval of time is supposed to have elapsed between the two parts of the Play.

Enter ORESTES.

Orest. Athena queen, at Loxias' hest I come.
Receive the suppliant with propitious grace.
Not now polluted, nor unwashed from guilt
I cling to the first altar; time hath mellowed
My hue of crime, and friendly men receive
The curse-beladen wanderer to their homes.
True to the god's oracular command,
O'er land and sea with weary foot I fare,
To find thy shrine, O goddess, and clasp thine image;
And now redemption from thy doom I wait.

Enter CHORUS.

Chorus. 'Tis well. The man is here. His track I know.
The sure advisal of our voiceless guide
Follow; as hound a wounded stag pursues,
We track the blood, and snuff the coming death.
Soothly we pant, with life-outwearying toils
Sore overburdened! O'er the wide sea far
I came, and with my wingless flight outstripped
The couriers of the deep. Here he must lie,
In some pent corner skulking. In my nostrils
The scent of mortal blood doth laugh me welcome.

CHORUS.[25]

Voice 1. Look, sisters, look!
Voice 2. On the right, on the left, and round about,
Search every nook!
Voice 3. Warily watch him,
The blood-guilty ranger,
That Fraud may not snatch him,
From me the Avenger!
Voice 1. At the shrine of the goddess,
He bendeth him lowly,
Embracing her image,
The ancient the holy.
Voice 2. With hands crimson-reeking,
He clingeth profanely,
A free pardon seeking
From Pallas—how vainly!
Voice 3. For blood, when it floweth,
For once and for ever
It sinks, and it knoweth
To mount again never.
Voice 1. Thou shalt pay me with pain;
From thy heart, from thy liver
I will suck, I will drain
Thy life's crimson river.
Voice 2. The cup from thy veins
I will quaff it, how rarely!
I will wither thy brains,
Thou shalt pine late and early.
Voice 3. I will drag thee alive,
For thy guilt matricidal,
To the dens of the damned,
For thy lasting abidal.

EPODE.

Tutti. There imprisoned thou shalt see
All who living sinned with thee,
'Gainst the gods whom men revere,
'Gainst honoured guest, or parents dear;
All the guilty who inherited
Woe, even as their guilt had merited.
For Hades,* in his halls of gloom,
With a justly portioned doom,

Literally the unseen world. Sometimes used for the King of the unseen world—Pluto.

Binds them down securely:
All the crimes of human kind,
In the tablet of his mind,
He hath graven surely.

Orest. By manifold ills I have been taught to know
All expiations; and the time to speak
I know, and to be silent. In this matter
As a wise master taught me, so my tongue
Shapes utterance. The curse that bound me sleeps;
My harsh-grained guilt is finer worn, the deep
Ensanguined stain washed to a softer hue;
Still reeking fresh with gore, on Phœbus' hearth,
The blood of swine hath now wrought my lustration,*
And I have held communings with my kind
Once and again unharming. Time, that smooths
All things, hath smoothed the front of my offence.
With unpolluted lips I now implore
Thy aid, Athena, of this land the queen.
Myself, a firm ally, I pledge to thee,
Myself, the Argive people, and their land,
Thy bloodless prize. And whether distant far
On Libyan plains beside Tritonian pools,
Thy natal flood, with forward foot firm planted,
Erect, or with decorous stole high-seated,[27]
Thy friends thou aidest, or with practised eye
The ordered battle on Phlegrean fields
Thou musterest[28]—come!—for gods can hear from far—
And from these woes complete deliverance send!

Chorus. Not all Apollo's, all Athena's power
Shall aid thee. Thou, of gods and men forsook,
Shalt pine and dwindle, stranger to the name
Of joy, a wasted shadow, bloodless sucked
To fatten wrathful gods. Thou dost not speak,
But, as a thing devoted, standest dumb,
My prey, even mine! my living banquet thou,
My fireless victim. List, and thou shalt hear
My song, that binds thee with its viewless chain.

Chorus. Deftly, deftly weave the dance!
Sisters lift the dismal strain!
Sing the Furies, justly dealing
Dooms deserved to guilty mortals;
Deftly, deftly lift the strain!
Whoso lifted hands untainted

* See Introductory Remarks.

Him no Furies' wrath shall follow,
He shall live unharmed by me;
But who sinned, as this offender,
Hiding foul ensanguined hands,
We with him are present, bearing
Unhired witness for the dead;
We will tread his heels, exacting
Blood for blood, even to the end.

CHORAL HYMN.[29]

STROPHE I.

Mother Night that bore me,
A scourge, to go before thee,
To scourge, with stripes delightless,
The seeing and the sightless,[30]
Hear me, I implore thee,
O Mother Night!
Mother Night that bore me,
The son of Leto o'er me
Rough rides, in thy despite.
From me, the just pursuer,
He shields the evil-doer,
The son to me devoted,
For mother-murder noted,
He claims against the right.

Where the victim lies,
Let the death-hymn rise!
Lift ye the hymn of the Furies amain!
The gleeless song, and the lyreless strain,[31]
That bindeth the heart with a viewless chain,
With notes of distraction and maddening sorrow,
Blighting the brain, and burning the marrow!
Where the victim lies,
Let the death-hymn rise,
The hymn that binds with a viewless chain!

ANTISTROPHE I.

Mother Night that bore me,
The Fate that was before me,
This portion gave me surely,
This lot for mine securely,
To bear the scourge before thee,
O Mother Night!

And, in embrace untender
To hold the red offender,
That sinned in gods' despite,
And wheresoe'er he wend him,
His keepers close we tend him.
In living or in dying,
From us there is no flying,
The daughters of the Night.

Where the victim lies,
Let the death-hymn rise!
Lift ye the hymn of the Furies amain!
The gleeless song, and the lyreless strain,
That bindeth the heart with a viewless chain,
With notes of distraction and maddening sorrow,
Blighting the brain, and burning the marrow!
Where the victim lies,
Let the death-hymn rise,
The hymn that binds with a viewless chain!

STROPHE II.

From primal ages hoary,
This lot, our pride and glory,
Appointed was to us;
To Hades' gloomy portal,
To chase the guilty mortal,
But from Olympians, reigning
In lucid seats,* abstaining;
Their nectared feasts we taste not,
Their sun-white robes invest not
The maids of Erebus.

But, with scourge and with ban,
We prostrate the man,
Who with smooth-woven wile,
And a fair-faced smile,
Hath planted a snare for his friend;
Though fleet, we shall find him,
Though strong, we shall bind him,
Who planted a snare for his friend.

ANTISTROPHE II.

This work of labour earnest,[32]
This task severest, sternest,

* *Lucidae sedes.*—HORACE III. 3.

Let none remove from us.
To all their due we render,
Each deeply-marked offender
Our searching eye reproveth,
Though blissful Jove removeth,
From his Olympian glory,
Abhorr'd of all and gory,
The maids of Erebus.

But, swift as the wind,
We follow and find,
Till he stumbles apace,
Who had hoped in the race,
To escape from the grasp of the Furies!
And we trample him low,
Till he writhe in his woe,
Who had fled from the chase of the Furies.

STROPHE III.

The thoughts heaven-scaling
Of men haughty-hearted,
At our breath, unavailing
Like smoke they departed.
Our jealous foot hearing,
They stumble before us,
And bite the ground, fearing
Our dark-vested chorus.

ANTISTROPHE III.

They fall, and perceive not
The foe that hath found them;
They are blind and believe not,
Thick darkness hath bound them.
From the halls of the fated,
A many-voiced wailing
Of sorrow unsated
Ascends unavailing.

STROPHE IV.

For the Furies work readily
Vengeance unsparing,
Surely and steadily
Ruin preparing.
Dark crimes strictly noted,
Sure-memoried they store them;

And, judgment once voted,
Prayers vainly implore them.
For they know no communion
With the bright-throned union
Of the gods of the day;
Where the living appear not,
Where the pale Shades near not,
In regions delightless,
All sunless and sightless,
They dwell far away.

ANTISTROPHE IV.

What mortal reveres not
Our deity awful?
When he names us, who fears not
To work deeds unlawful?
From times hoary-dated,
This statute for ever
Divinely was fated;
Time takes from it never.
For dishonour we bear not,
Though the bright thrones we share not
With the gods of the day.
Our right hoary-dated
We claim unabated,
Though we dwell, where delightless
No sun cheers the sightless,
'Neath the ground far away.

Enter ATHENA.

Athena. The cry that called me from Scamander's banks[83]
I heard afar, even as I hied to claim
The land for mine which the Achæan chiefs
Assigned me, root and branch, my portion fair
Of the conquered roods, a goodly heritage
To Theseus' sons. Thence, with unwearied foot,
I journeyed here by these high-mettled steeds
Car-borne, my wingless ægis in the gale
Full-bosomed whirring. And now, who are ye,
A strange assembly, though I fear you not,
Here gathered at my gates? I speak to both,
To thee the stranger, that with suppliant arms
Enclasps my statue—Whence art thou? And you,

Like to no generation seed-begotten,
Like to no goddess ever known of gods,
Like to no breathing forms of mortal kind;
But to reproach with contumelious phrase
Who wrong not us, nor courtesy allows,
Nor Themis wills. Whence are ye?

horus. Daughter of Jove,
'Tis shortly said: of the most ancient Night
The tristful daughters we, and our dread name,
Even from the fearful CURSE we bear, we borrow.*

thena. I know you, and the dreaded name ye bear.

horus. Our sacred office, too—

thena. That I would hear.

horus. The guilty murderer from his home we hunt.

thena. And the hot chase, where ends it?

horus. There, where joy
Is never named.

thena. And is this man the quarry,
That, with hoarse-throated whoop, thou now pursuest?

horus. He slew his mother—dared the worst of crimes.

thena. What mightier fear, what strong necessity
Spurred him to this?

horus. What fear so strong that it
Should prompt a mother's murder?

thena. There are two parties. Only one hath spoken.

horus. He'll neither swear himself, nor take my oath.[34]

thena. The show of justice, not fair Justice self,
Thou lovest.

horus. How? Speak—thou so rich in wisdom.

thena. Oaths are no proof, to make the wrong the right.

horus. Prove thou. A true and righteous judgment judge.

thena. I shall be judge, betwixt this man and thee
To speak the doom.

horus. Even thou. Thy worthy deeds
Give thee the worth in this high strife to judge.

thena. Now, stranger, 'tis thy part to speak. Whence come,
Thy lineage what, and what thy fortunes, say,
And then refute this charge against thee brought.
For well I note the sacredness about thee,
That marks the suppliant who atonement seeks,
In old Ixíon's guise;[35] and thou hast fled

* See Introductory Remarks. They designate themselves here from their origin
oal or *imprecations.*

For refuge, to my holy altar clinging.
Answer me this, and plainly tell thy tale.

Orest. Sovran Athena, first from these last words
A cause of much concernment be removed.
I seek for no atonement; no pollution
Cleaves to thy sacred image from my touch.
Of this receive a proof. Thou know'st a murderer
Being unatoned a voiceless penance bears,
Till, from the hand of friendly man, the blood
Of a young beast from lusty veins hath sprent him,
Cleansing from guiltiness. These sacred rites
Have been performed: the blood of beasts hath sprent n
The lucent lymph hath purged the filthy stain.
For this enough. As for my race, I am
An Argive born: and for my father, he
Was Agamemnon, king of men, by whom
The chosen admiral of the masted fleet,
The ancient city of famous Priam thou
Didst sheer uncity.[36] Sad was his return;
For, with dark-bosomed guile, my mother killed him,
Snared in the meshes of a tangled net,
And of the bloody deed the bath was witness.
I then, returning to my father's house
After long exile—I confess the deed—
Slew her who bore me, a dear father's murder
With murder quitting. The blame—what blame may b
I share with Loxias, who fore-augured griefs
To goad my heart if, by my fault, such guilt
Should go unpunished. I have spoken. Thou
What I have done, if justly or unjustly,
Decide. Thy doom, howe'er it fall, contents me.

Athena. In this high cause to judge, no mortal man
May venture; nor may I divide the law
Of right and wrong, in such keen strife of blood.
For thee, in that thou comest to my halls,[37]
In holy preparation perfected,
A pure and harmless suppliant, I, as pledged
Already thy protector, may not judge thee.
For these, 'tis no light thing to slight their office.
For, should I send them hence uncrowned with triumph,
Dripping fell poison from their wrathful breasts,
They'd leave a noisome pestilence in the land
Behind them. Thus both ways I'm sore perplexed;

Absent or present, they do bring a curse.
But since this business needs a swift decision,
Sworn judges I'll appoint, and they shall judge
Of blood in every age. Your testimonies
And proofs meanwhile, and all that clears the truth,
Provide. Myself, to try this weighty cause,
My choicest citizens will choose, and bind them
By solemn oath to judge a righteous judgment.

CHORAL HYMN.[38]

STROPHE I.

Ancient rights and hoary uses
Now shall yield to young abuses,
Right and wrong together chime,
If the vote
Fail to note
Mother-murder for a crime.
Murder now, made nimble-handed,
Wide shall rage without control;
Sons against their parents banded
Deeds abhorred
With the sword
Now shall work, while ages roll.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Now no more, o'er deeds unlawful,
Shall the sleeping Mænads* awful
Watch, with jealous eyes to scan;
Free and chainless,
Wild and reinless,
Stalks o'er Earth each murtherous plan.
Friend to friend his loss deploreth,
Lawless rapine, treacherous wound,
But in vain his plaint he poureth;
To his bruises
Earth refuses
Balm; no balm on Earth is found.

STROPHE II.

Now no more, from grief's prostration,
Cries and groans
Heaven shall scale with invocation—
"Justice hear my supplication,
Hear me, Furies, from your thrones!"

* That is, the Furies themselves.

From the recent sorrow bleeding,
Father thus or mother calls,
Vainly with a piteous pleading,
For the House of Justice falls.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Blest the man in whose heart reigneth
Holy Fear;
Fear his heart severely traineth;
Blest, from troublous woe who gaineth
Ripest fruits of wisdom clear:*
But who sports, a careless liver,[39]
In the sunshine's flaunting show,
Holy Justice, he shall never
Thy severest virtue know.

STROPHE III.

Lordless life, or despot-ridden,
Be they both from me forbidden.
To the wise mean strength is given,[40]
Thus the gods have ruled in heaven;
Gods, that gently or severely
Judge, discerning all things clearly.
Mark my word, I tell thee truly,
Pride, that lifts itself unduly,[41]
Had a godless heart for sire.
Healthy-minded moderation
Wins the wealthy consummation,
Every heart's desire.

ANTISTROPHE III.

Yet, again, I tell thee truly,
At Justice' altar bend thee duly.
Wean thine eye from lawless yearning
After gain; with godless spurning
Smite not thou that shrine most holy.
Punishment, that travels slowly,
Comes at last, when least thou fearest.
Yet, once more; with truth sincerest,
Love thy parents and revere,

* Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass,
Und durch die kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass,
Er kennt Euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte!— Goethe.

And the guest, that to protect him,
Claims thy guardian roof, respect him,
With an holy fear.*

STROPHE IV.

Whoso, with no forced endeavour,
Sin-eschewing liveth,
Him to hopeless ruin never
Jove the Saviour giveth.
But whose hand, with greed rapacious,
Draggeth all things for his prey,
He shall strike his flag audacious,
When the god-sent storm shall bray,
Winged with fate at last;
When the stayless sail is flapping,
When the sail-yard swings, and, snapping,
Crashes to the blast.

ANTISTROPHE IV.

He shall call, but none shall hear him,
When dark ocean surges;
None with saving hand shall near him,
When his prayer he urges.
Laughs the god, to see him vainly
Grasping at the crested rock;
Fool, who boasted once profanely
Firm to stand in Fortune's shock;
Who so great had been
His freighted wealth with fearful crashing,
On the rock of Justice dashing,
Dies, unwept, unseen.

Enter ATHENA, *behind a Herald.*

Athena. Herald, proclaim the diet, and command
The people to attention; with strong breath
Give the air-shattering Tyrrhene trump free voice,[42]
To speak shrill-throated to the assembled throngs;
And, while the judges take their solemn seats,
In hushed submission, let the city hear
My laws that shall endure for aye; and these,
In hushed submission, wait the righteous doom.

* "For strangers and the poor are from Jove."—HOMER.

Enter APOLLO.[43]

Chorus. Sovran Apollo, rule where thou art lord;
But here what business brings the prophet? Speak.
Apollo. I come a witness of the truth; this man
Is suppliant to me, he on my hearth
Found refuge, him I purified from blood.
I, too, am patron of his cause, I share
The blame, if blame there be, in that he slew
His mother. Pallas, order thou the trial.
Athena [*to the Furies*]. Speak ye the first, 'tis wiseliest ordered thus,
That, who complains, his plaint set forth in order,
Point after point, articulately clear.
Chorus. Though we be many, yet our words are few.
Answer thou singly, as we singly ask;
This first—art thou the murderer of thy mother?
Orest. I did the deed. This fact hath no denial.
Chorus. Once worsted! With three fits I gain the trial.
Orest. Boast, when thou seest me fall. As yet I stand.
Chorus. This answer now—how didst thou do the deed.
Orest. Thus; with my pointed dagger, in the neck
I smote her.
Chorus. Who the bloody deed advised?
Orest. The god of oracles. He he stands to witness.
Chorus. Commanding murder with prophetic nod?
Orest. Ay! and even now I do not blame the god.
Chorus. Soon, soon, thou'lt blame him, when the pebble drops
Into the urn of justice with thy doom.
Orest. My murdered sire will aid me from the tomb.
Chorus. Trust in the dead; in thy dead mother trust.
Orest. She died, with two foul blots well marked for vengeance.
Chorus. How so? This let the judges understand.
Orest. The hand that killed her husband killed my father.
Chorus. If she for her crimes died, why livest thou?
Orest. If her thou didst not vex, why vex me now?
Chorus. She slew a man, but not of kindred blood.
Orest. Is the son's blood all to the mother kin,
None to the father?
Chorus. Peace, thou sin-stained monster!
Dost thou abjure the dearest blood, the mother's
That bore thee 'neath her zone?
Orest. [*to Apollo*]. Be witness thou.
Apollo, speak for me, if by the rule

Of Justice she was murdered. That the deed
Was done, and by these hands, I not deny;
If justly or unjustly blood was spilt,
Thou knowest. Teach me how to make reply.

Apollo. I speak to you, Athena's mighty council;
And what I speak is truth: the prophet lies not.
From my oracular seat was published never
To man, to woman, or to city aught
By my Olympian sire unfathered.* Ye
How Justice sways the scale will wisely weigh;
But this remember—what my father wills
Is law. Jove's will is stronger than an oath.

Chorus. Jove, say'st thou, touched thy tongue with inspiration,
To teach Orestes that he might avenge
A father's death by murdering a mother?

Apollo. His was no common father—Agamemnon,
Honoured the kingly sceptre god-bestowed
To bear—he slain by a weak woman, not
By furious Amazon with far-darting bow,
But in such wise as I shall now set forth
To thee, Athena, and to these that sit
On this grave bench of judgment. Him returning
All prosperous from the wars, with fairest welcome
She hailed her lord, and in the freshening bath
Bestowed him; there, ev'n while he laved, she came
Spreading death's mantle out, and, in a web
Of curious craft entangled, stabbed him. Such
Was the sad fate of this most kingly man,
Of all revered, the fleet's high admiral.
A tale it is to prick your heart with pity,
Even yours that seal the judgment.

Chorus. Jove, thou sayest,
Prefers the father: yet himself did bind
With bonds his hoary-dated father Kronos.[44]
Make this with that to square, and thou art wise.
Ye judges, mark me, if I reason well.

Apollo. O odious monsters, of all gods abhorred!
A chain made fast may be untied again.
This ill hath many cures; but, when the dust
Hath once drunk blood, no power can raise it. Jove
Himself doth know no charm to disenchant
Death; other things he turns both up and down,
At his good pleasure, fainting not in strength.

* See above, p. 141, Note 4.

Chorus. Consider well whereto thy words will lead thee.
How shall this man, who spilt his mother's blood,
Dwell in his father's halls at Argos? How
Devoutly kneel at the public altar? How
With any clanship share lustration? [45]

Apollo. This
Likewise I'll answer. Mark me! whom we call
The mother begets not; [46] she is but the nurse,
Whose fostering breast the new-sown seed receives.
The father truly gets; the dam but cherishes
A stranger-bud, that, if the gods be kind,
May blossom soon, and bear. Behold a proof!
Without a mother may a child be born,
Not so without a father. Which to witness
Here is this daughter of Olympian Jove,
Not nursed in darkness, in the womb, and yet
She stands a goddess, heavenly mother ne'er
Bore greater. Pallas, here I plight my faith
To magnify thy city and thy people;
And I this suppliant to thy hearth hath sent,
Thy faithful ally ever. May the league
Here sworn to-day their children's children bind!

Athena. Now judges, as your judgment is, I charge you,
So vote the doom. Words we have had enough.

Chorus. Our quiver's emptied. We await the doom.

Athena. How should the sentence fall to keep me free
Of your displeasure?

Chorus. What we said we said.
Even as your heart informs you, nothing fearing,
So judges justly vote, the oath revering.

Athena. Now, hear my ordinance, Athenians! [47] Ye,
In this first strife of blood, umpires elect,
While age on age shall roll, the sons of Aegeus
This Council shall revere. Here, on this hill,
The embattled Amazons pitched their tents of yore, [48]
What time with Theseus striving, they their tents
Against these high-towered infant walls uptowered.
To Mars they sacrificed, and, to this day,
This Mars' Hill speaks their story. Here, Athenians,
Shall reverence of the gods, and holy fear,
That shrinks from wrong, both night and day possess,
A place apart, so long as fickle change
Your ancient laws disturbs not; but, if this

Pure fount with muddy streams ye trouble, ye
Shall draw the draught in vain. From anarchy
And slavish masterdom alike my ordinance
Preserve my people! Cast not from your walls
All high authority; for where no fear
Awful remains, what mortal will be just?
This holy reverence use, and ye possess
A bulwark, and a safeguard of the land,
Such as no race of mortals vaunteth, far
In Borean Scythia, or the land of Pelops.*
This council I appoint intact to stand
From gain, a venerated conclave, quick
In pointed indignation, when all sleep
A sleepless watch. These words of warning hear,
My citizens for ever. Now ye judges
Rise, take your pebbles, and by vote decide,
The sacred oath revering. I have spoken.

The AEROPAGITES *advance; and, as each puts his pebble into the urn, the* CHORUS *and* APOLLO *alternately address them as follows:*

Chorus. I warn ye well: the sisterhood beware,
Whose wrath hangs heavier than the land may bear.
Apollo. I warn ye well: Jove is my father; fear
To turn to nought the words of me, his seer.
Chorus. If thou dost plead, where thou hast no vocation,
For blood, will men respect thy divination?
Apollo. Must then my father share thy condemnation,
When first he heard Ixion's supplication?
Chorus. Thou say'st.[49] But I, if justice be denied me,
Will sorely smite the land that so defied me.
Apollo. Among the gods the elder, and the younger,
Thou hast no favour: I shall prove the stronger.
Chorus. Such were thy deeds in Pheres' house,[50] deceiving
The Fates, and mortal men from death reprieving.
Apollo. Was it a crime to help a host? to lend
A friendly hand to raise a sinking friend?
Chorus. Thou the primeval Power didst undermine,
Mocking the hoary goddesses with wine.
Apollo. Soon, very soon, when I the cause shall gain,
Thou'lt spit thy venom on the ground in vain.

* That is, *Asia*. See Introduction to the Agamemnon.

Chorus. Thou being young, dost jeer my ancient years
With youthful insolence; till the doom appears,
I'll patient wait; my hot-spurred wrath I'll stay,
And even-poised betwixt two tempers sway.

Athena. My part remains; and I this crowning pebble
Drop to Orestes; for I never knew
The mother's womb that bore me.* I give honor,
Save in my virgin nature, to the male
In all things; all my father lives in me.[51]
Not blameless be the wife, who dared to slay
Her husband, lord and ruler of her home.
My voice is for Orestes; though the votes
Fall equal from the urn, my voice shall save him.
Now shake the urn, to whom this duty falls,
And tell the votes.

Orest. O Phœbus, how shall end
This doubtful issue?

Chorus. O dark Night, my mother,
Behold these things!

Orest. One moment blinds me quite,
Or to a blaze of glory opes my eyes.

Chorus. We sink to shame, or to more honor rise.

Apollo.[52] Judges, count well the pebbles as they fall,
And with just jealousy divide them. One
Being falsely counted works no simple harm.
One little pebble saves a mighty house.

Athena. Hear now the doom. This man from blood is free
The votes are equal; he escapes by me.

Orest. O Pallas, Saviour of my father's house,
Restorer of the exile's hope, Athena,
I praise thee! Now belike some Greek will say,
The Argive man revisiteth the homes
And fortunes of his father, by the aid
Of Pallas, Loxias, and Jove the Saviour
All-perfecting, who pled the father's cause,
Fronting the wrathful Furies of the mother!
I now depart: and to this land I leave,
And to this people, through all future time,
An oath behind me, that no lord of Argos
Shall ever brandish the well-pointed spear
Against this friendly land.† When, from the tomb,

* Alluding to the well-known and beautiful allegoric myth that the goddess Wisdom sprang, full-armed, into birth from the brain of the all-wise Omnipotent, without the intervention of a mother.

† See the Preliminary Remarks.

I shall perceive who disregards this oath
Of my sons' sons, I will perplex that man
With sore perplexities inextricable;
Ways of despair, and evil-birded paths *
Shall be his portion, cursing his own choice.
But if my vows be duly kept, with those
That in the closely-banded league shall aid
Athena's city, I am present ever.
Then fare thee well, thou and thy people! Never
May foe escape thy grasp! When thou dost struggle,
Safety and victory attend thy spear!

[*Exit.*

Chorus. Curse on your cause,
Ye gods that are younger!
O'er the time-hallowed laws
Rough ye ride as the stronger.
Of the prey that was ours
Ye with rude hands bereave us,
'Mid the dark-dreaded Powers
Shorn of honor ye leave us.
Behold, on the ground
From a heart of hostility,
I sprinkle around
Black gouts of sterility!
A plague I will bring,
With a dry lichen spreading;
No green blade shall spring
Where the Fury is treading.
To abortion I turn
The birth of the blooming,
Where the plague-spot shall burn
Of my wrath, life-consuming.
I am mocked,† but in vain
They rejoice at my moaning;
They shall pay for my pain,
With a fearful atoning,
Who seized on my right,
And, with wrong unexampled,
On the daughters of Night
High scornfully trampled.

* παρόρνιθας, as we say ill-starred—that is, *unfortunate*, *unlucky*, the metaphor being varied, according to the changes of fashions in the practice of divination.

† Alii γελῶμαι—"fortasse non male."—PALEY.

Athena. Be ruled by me: your heavy-bosomed groans
Refrain. Not vanquished thou, but the fair vote
Leapt equal from the urn, with no disgrace
To thee. From Jove himself clear witness came;
The oracular god that urged the deed, the same
Stood here to vouch it, that Orestes might not
Reap harm from his obedience. Soothe ye, therefore;
Cast not your bolted vengeance on this land,
Your gouts of wrath divine distil not, stings
Of pointed venom, with keen corrosive power
Eating life's seeds, all barrenness and blight.
A home within this land I pledge you, here
A shrine, a refuge, and a hearth secure,
Where ye on shining thrones shall sit, my city
Yielding devoutest homage to your power.

Chorus. Curse on your cause,
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O'er the time-hallowed laws
Rough ye ride, as the stronger.
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On the daughters of Night
High scornfully trampled.

Athena. Dishonoured are ye not: Spit not your rancour
On this fair land remediless. Rests my trust
On Jove, the mighty, I of all the gods
Sharing alone the strong keys that unlock
His thunder-halls:[53] but this I name not here.
Yield thou: cast not the seed of reckless speech
To crop the land with woe. Soothing the waves
Of bitter anger darkling in thy breast,
Dwell in this land, thy dreadful deity
Sistered with me. When thronging worshippers
Henceforth shall cull choice firstlings for thine altars,
Praying thy grace to bless the wedded rite,
And the child-bearing womb—then honoured so,
How wise my present counsel thou shalt know.

CHORUS.

Voice 1. I to dwell 'neath the Earth
All clipt of my glory,
In the dark-chambered Earth,
I, the ancient, the hoary!
Voice 2. I breathe on thee curses,
I cut through thy marrow,
For the insult that pierces
My heart like an arrow.
Voice 3. Hear my cry, mother Night,
'Gainst the gods that deceived me!
With their harsh-handed might
Of my right they bereaved me.

Athena. Thy anger I forgive; for thou'rt the elder.
But though thy years bring wisdom, to me also
Jove gave a heart, not undiscerning. You—
Mark well my words—if now some foreign land
Ye choose, will rue your choice, and long for Athens.
The years to be shall float more richly fraught
With honor to my citizens; thou shalt hold
An honoured seat beside Erectheus' home,[54]
Where men and women in marshalled pomp shall pay thee
Such homage, as no land on Earth may render.
But cast not ye on this my chosen land
Whetstones of fury, teaching knives to drink
The blood of tender bowels, madding the heart
With wineless drunkenness, that men shall swell
Like game cocks for the battle; save my city

From brothered strife, and from domestic brawls. [55]
Without the walls, and far from kindred hearths
Rage war, where honor calls, and glory crowns.
A bird of blood within the house I love not.
Use thine election; wisely use it; give
A blessing, and a blessing take; with me
May this land dear to the gods be dear to thee!

CHORUS.

Voice 1. I to dwell 'neath the Earth
All clipt of my glory,
In the dark-chambered Earth
I, the ancient, the hoary!
Voice 2. I breathe on thee curses,
I cut through thy marrow,
For the insult that pierces
My heart like an arrow.
Voice 3. Hear my cry, mother Night,
'Gainst the gods that deceived me!
With their harsh-handed might
Of my right they bereaved me.

Athena. To advise thee well I faint not. Never more
Shalt thou, a hoary-dated power, complain
That I, a younger, or my citizens,
From our inhospitable gates expelled thee
Of thy due honors shortened. If respect
For sacred Peitho's* godhead, for the honey
And charming of the tongue may move thee, stay;
But, if ye will go, show of justice none
Remains, with rancour, wrath, and scathe to smite
This land and people. Stands your honoured lot
With me for ever, so ye scorn it not.

Chorus. Sovran Athena, what sure home receives me?

Athena. A home from sorrow free. Receive it freely.

Chorus. And when received, what honors wait me then?

Athena. No house shall prosper where thy blessing fails.

Chorus. This by thy grace is sure?

Athena. I will upbuild
His house who honours thee.

Chorus. This pledged for ever?

Athena. I cannot promise what I not perform.

Chorus. Thy words have soothed me, and my wrath relents.

* The goddess of Persuasion—πειθώ.

Athena. Here harboured thou wilt number many friends.
Chorus. Say, then, how shall my hymn uprise to bless thee?
Athena. Hymn things that strike fair victory's mark: from Earth,
From the sea's briny dew, and from the sky
Bring blessings; the benignly-breathing gales
On summer wings be wafted to this land;
Let the Earth swell with the exuberant flow
Of fruits and flowers, that want may be unknown.
Bless human seed with increase, but cast out
The impious man; even as a gardener, I
Would tend the flowers, the briars and the thorns
Heaped for the burning. This thy province. I
In feats of Mars conspicuous will not fail
To plant this city 'fore all eyes triumphant.

STROPHE I.

Chorus. Pallas, thy welcome so kindly compelling
Hath moved me; I scorn not to mingle my dwelling
With thine, and with Jove's, the all-ruling, thy sire.
The city I scorn not, where Mars guards the portals,
The fortress of gods,[56] the fair grace of Immortals.
I bless thee prophetic; to work thy desire
To the Sun, when he shines in his full-flooded splendour,
Her tribute to thee may the swelling Earth render,
And bounty with bounty conspire!
Athena. Athens, no trifling gain I've won thee.
With rich blessing thou shalt harbour,
Through my grace, these much-prevailing
Sternest-hearted Powers. For they
Rule, o'er human fates appointed,
With far-reaching sway.
Woe to the wretch, by their wrath smitten![57]
With strokes he knows not whence descending,
Not for his own, for guilt inherited,[58]
They with silent-footed vengeance
Shall o'ertake him: in the dust,
Heaven with piercing cries imploring,
Crushed the sinner lies.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Chorus. Far from thy dwelling, and far from thy border,
By the grace of my godhead benignant I order

The blight that may blacken the bloom of thy trees.
Far from thy border, and far from thy dwelling
Be the hot blast that shrivels the bud in its swelling,
The seed-rotting taint, and the creeping disease!
Thy flocks still be doubled, thy seasons be steady,
And, when Hermes is near thee,[59] thy hand still be ready
The Heaven-dropt bounty to seize!

Athena. Hear her words, my city's warders,
Fraught with blessing; she prevaileth
With Olympians and Infernals,
Dread Erinnys much revered.
Mortal fates she guideth plainly
To what goal she pleaseth, sending
Songs to some, to others days
With tearful sorrows dulled.

STROPHE II.

Chorus. Far from your dwelling
Be death's early knelling,
When falls in his green strength the strong
Your virgins, the fairest,
To brave youths the rarest
Be mated, glad life to prolong!
Ye Fates, high-presiding,[60]
The right well dividing,
Dread powers darkly mothered with me;
Our firm favour sharing,
From judgment unsparing
The homes of the just man be free!
But the guilty shall fear them,
When in terror shall near them
The Fates, sternly sistered with me.

Athena. Work your perfect will, dread maidens,
O'er my land benignly watching!
I rejoice. Blest be the eyes
Of Peitho, that with strong persuasion
Armed my tongue, to soothe the fierce
Refusal of these awful maids.
Jove, that rules the forum, nobly
In the high debate hath conquered.[61]
In the strife of blessing now,
You with me shall vie for ever.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Chorus. Far from thy border
The lawless disorder,
That sateless of evil shall reign!
Far from thy dwelling
The dear blood welling,
That taints thy own hearth with the stain,
When slaughter from slaughter
Shall flow, like the water,
And rancour from rancour shall grow!
But joy with joy blending
Live, each to all lending,
And hating one-hearted the foe!
When bliss hath departed,
From will single-hearted,
A fountain of healing shall flow.

Athena. Wisely now the tongue of kindness
Thou hast found, the way of love;
And these terror-speaking faces
Now look wealth to me and mine.
Her so willing, ye more willing
Now receive; this land and city,
On ancient right securely throned,
Shall shine for evermore.

STROPHE III.

Chorus. Hail, and all hail! mighty people be greeted!
On the sons of Athena shine sunshine the clearest!
Blest people, near Jove the Olympian seated,
And dear to the virgin his daughter the dearest.
Timely wise 'neath the wings of the daughter ye gather;
And mildly looks down on her children the father.

Athena. Hail, all hail to you! but chiefly
Me behoves it now to lead you
To your fore-appointed homes.
Go, with holy train attendant,
With sacrifice, and torch resplendent.
Underneath the ground.
Go, and with your potent godhead
Quell the ill that threats the city,
Spur the good to victory's goal.
Lead the way ye sons of Cranaus,*

* Like Erectheus (p. 167 above), one of the most ancient Earth-born kings of Attica.

To these strangers, strange no more;
Their kindly thoughts to you remember,
Grateful evermore.

ANTISTROPHE III.

Chorus. Hail, yet again, with this last salutation,
Ye sons of Athena, ye citizens all!
On gods, and on mortals, in high congregation
Assembled, my blessing not vainly shall fall.
O city of Pallas, while thou shalt revere me,
Thy walls hold the pledge that no harm shall come near thee
Athena. Well hymned. My heart chimes with you, and I send
The beamy-twinkling torches to conduct you
To your dark-vaulted chambers 'neath the ground.
They who attend my shrine, with pious homage,
Shall be your convoy. The fair eye of the land,
The marshalled host of Theseus' sons shall march
In festive train with you, both man and woman,
Matron and maid, green youth and hoary age.
Honor the awful maids, clad with the grace
Of purple-tinctured robes; and let the flame
March 'fore their path bright-rayed; and, evermore,
With populous wealth smile every Attic rood
Blessed by this gracious-minded sisterhood.[61]

CONVOY, *conducting the* EUMENIDES *in festal pomp to their subterranean temple, with torches in their hands:*

STROPHE I.

Go with honor crowned and glory,
Of hoary Night the daughters hoary,
To your destined hall.
Where our sacred train is wending,
Stand, ye pious throngs attending,
Hushed in silence all.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Go to hallowed habitations,
'Neath Ogygian * Earth's foundations:
In that darksome hall
Sacrifice and supplication
Shall not fail. In adoration
Silent worship all.

So the Greeks called anything very ancient, from Ogyges, an old Bœotian king.

STROPHE II.

Here, in caverned halls, abiding,
High on awful thrones presiding,
Gracious ye shall reign.
March in torches' glare rejoicing!
Sing, ye throngs, their praises, voicing
Loud the exultant strain!

ANTISTROPHE II.

Blazing torch, and pure libation
From age to age this pious nation
Shall not use in vain.
Thus hath willed it Jove all-seeing,
Thus the Fate. To their decreeing
Shout the responsive strain!

PROMETHEUS BOUND

A LYRICO-DRAMATIC SPECTACLE

Δῆσε δ' ἀλυκτοπέδῃσι Προμηθέα ποικιλόβουλην
Δεσμοῖς ἀργαλέοισι.

HESIOD.

Neither to change, nor flatter, nor repent.

SHELLEY.

PERSONS

MIGHT and FORCE, Ministers of Jove.
HEPHAESTHUS or VULCAN, the God of Fire.
PROMETHEUS, Son of Iapetus, a Titan.
CHORUS OF OCEANIDES.
OCEANUS.
IO, Daughter of INACHUS, King of Argos.
HERMES, Messenger of the Gods.

SCENE—*A Rocky Desert in European Scythia.*

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In the mythology of the ancient Greeks, as of many other nations, we find the earlier periods characterised by a series of terrible mundane struggles—wars in Heaven and wars on Earth—which serve as an introduction to, and a preparation for the more regularly ordered and more permanent dynasty that ultimately sways the sceptre of Olympus. In the theological poem of Hesiod, as in the prose narration of Apollodorus, Heaven and Earth are represented as the rulers of the first celestial dynasty; their offspring, called Titans, in the person of one of their number, Kronos, by a violent act of dethronement, forms a second dynasty; while he, in his turn, after a no less violent struggle, gives place to a third sceptre—viz., that of Jove—who, in the faith of the orthodox Athenian, was the supreme ruler of the world of gods, and men, now, after many throes and struggles, arrived, at its normal state, not henceforward to be disturbed. The general character which this succession of dynasties exhibits, is that of order arising out of confusion, peace out of war, and wisely-reasoned plan triumphing over brute force—

> "Scimus ut impios
> Titanas immanemque turmam
> Fulmine sustulerit caduco,
> Qui terram inertem, qui mare temperat
> Ventosum, et urbes, regnaque tristia,
> Divosque, mortalesque turbas,
> Imperio regit unus aequo."

This representation of the philosophic lyrist of a late age is in perfect harmony with the epithets μητιόεις and μητιέτα given to Jove by the earliest Greek poets, and with the allegory by which Μῆτις, or *Counsel* personified, is represented as one of the wives of the Supreme Ruler. It is worthy of notice also, in the same view, that the legends about the Titans, Giants, and other Earth-born monsters, warring with Jove, are often attached to districts—such as Campania and Cilicia—in which the signs of early volcanic action are, even at the present day, unmistakeable; plainly indicating that such mythic narrations were only exhibitions, in the historical form (according to the early style), of great elemental convulsions and physical changes taking place on the face of the Earth.

Among the persons most prominent in that primeval age o gigantic "world-strife" (if we may be allowed to Anglicize a Germa compound) stands Prometheus; not, however, like his Titan brethre in character, though identical with them in descent, and in the posi tion which he finally assumed towards the god in whose hands th supreme government of the world eventually remained. Prometheus as his name denotes, strives against the high authority of Jove, no by that "reasonless force which falls by its own weight," but b intelligence and cunning. Viewed in this character, he was th natural ally, not of the serpent-footed Giants and the flame-breathin Typhon, but of the All-wise Olympian; and such, indeed, Æschylus in the present piece (v. 219, p. 189 below), represents as having bee his original position: but, as "before honor is humility, and befor pride comes a fall," so the son of Iapetus, like Tantalus, and s many others in the profoundly moral mythology of the Hellene found himself exalted into the fellowship of the blissful gods, onl that he might be precipitated into a more terrible depth of misery He was wise; nay, benevolent (δάκηται, Hesiod. Theog., 614); hi delight was to exercise his high intellect in the elevation of th infant human race, sunk in a state of almost brutish stupidity; h stood forward as an incarnation of that practical intellect (s triumphant in these latter days), which subjects the rude element of nature, for human use and convenience, to mechanical calculatio and control; but, with all this, he was proud, he was haughty; hi Titanic strength and his curious intellect he used, to shake himse free from all dependence on the highest power, which the constitu tion of things had ordered should stand as the strong key-stone the whole. Not to ruin mankind, but to save them, he sinned th sin of Lucifer; he would make himself God; and, as in the eye of court-martial, the subaltern who usurps the functions of the com mander-in-chief stands not acquitted, because he alleges that h acted with a benevolent intent, or for the public good, so, in th faith of an orthodox Athenian, Prometheus was not the less worth of his airy chains because he defied the will of Jove in the champio ship of mankind. Neither man nor god may question or impug the divine decree of supreme Jove, on grounds of expediency propriety. With the will of Zeus, as with the laws of nature, the is no arguing. In this relationship the first, second, and third poi of duty is submission. Such is the doctrine of modern Christia theology; such, also, was the doctrine of the old Hellenic theologe

HESIOD—

Vain the wit is of the wisest to deceive the mind of Jove;
Not Prometheus, son of Iapetus, though his heart was moved by love,
Might escape the heavy anger of the god that rules the skies,
But, despite of all his cunning, with a strong chain bound he lies.
THEOG. 613.

Those who are acquainted with the philological learning on this subject, which I have discussed elsewhere,* or even with the common ideas on the legend of Prometheus brought into circulation by the productions of modern poetry, are aware that the view just given of the moral significance of this weighty old myth, is not the current one, and that we are rather accustomed to look upon Prometheus as a sort of proto-martyr of liberty, bearing up with the strength of a god against the punishment unjustly inflicted on him by the celestial usurper and tyrant, Jove. But Hesiod, we have just seen, looks on the matter with very different eyes; and the unquestioned supremacy of Jove that stands out everywhere, from the otherwise not always consistent theological system of the Iliad, leads plainly to the conclusion that Homer also, had he had occasion to introduce this legend, would have handled it in a spirit altogether different from our Shelleys and Byrons, and other earth-shaking and heaven-scaling poets of the modern revolutionary school. As little is there any ground (see the life of Æschylus, vol. I.) for the supposition that our tragedian has taken up different theological ground in reference to this myth, from that which belonged to the two great expositors of the popular creed; not to mention the staring absurdity of the idea, that a grave tragic poet in a serious composition, at a public religious festival, should have dared, or daring, should have been allowed, to hold up their supreme deity to a nation of freemen in the character of a cruel and unjust tyrant. Thrown back, therefore, on the original Hesiodic conception of the myth, we are led to observe that the imperfect and unsatisfactory ideas so current on this subject in modern times, have taken their rise from the practice (so natural under the circumstances) of looking on the extant piece as a complete whole, whereas nothing is more certain than that it is only a fragment; the second part, in fact, of a dramatic trilogy similar in conception and execution to that, of which we have endeavoured to present a reflection in the preceding pages. Potter, in his translation published a hundred years ago, prefaced his version of the present piece with the well-known fact, that Æschylus wrote three plays on this subject—*the Fire-bringing Prometheus, the Prometheus Bound, and the Prometheus Unbound*—but this intima-

* Classical Museum, No. XV. p. 1.

tion was not sufficient to prevent his readers, with the usual hastiness of human logic, from judging of what they saw, as if it were an organic whole, containing within itself every element necessary for forming a true conception of its character. The consequence was, that the hero of the piece, who, of course, tells his own story in the most favourable way for himself, was considered as having passed a final judgment on the case; as the friend and representative of man, he naturally seemed entitled to the gratitude of men; while Jove, being now only an idol in the world (perhaps a devil), and having no advocate in the heart of the modern reader, was made to stand—on the representation of the same Prometheus—as the type of heartless tyranny, and the impersonation of absolute power combined with absolute selfishness. This is Shelley's view; but that such was not the view of Æschylus we may be assured, both from the consideration already mentioned, and from the poet's method of reconciling apparently incompatible claims of opposite celestial powers, so curiously exhibited in the Eumenides. In the trilogy of the preceding pages, Orestes stands in a situation, so far as the development of the plot is concerned, precisely analogous to that of Prometheus in the present piece. His conduct, as submitted to the moral judgment of the spectator, produces the same conflict of contrary emotions of which his own bosom is the victim. With the one-half of our heart we approve of his avenging his father's murder; with the other half, we plead that a son shall, on no ground of offence, allow his indignation to proceed so far as to imbrue his hands in the blood of her whose milk he had sucked. This contrariety of emotions excited in the second piece of the trilogy produces the tragic knot, which it is the business of the poet to unloose, by the worthy interposition of a god. "*Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus.*"—Exactly so in the second piece of the Promethean trilogy, our moral judgment praises the benevolence of the god, who, to elevate our human race from brutish degradation, dared to defy omnipotent power, and to deceive the wisdom of the omniscient; while, at the same time, we cannot but condemn the spirit of unreined independence that would shake itself free from the great centre of moral cohesion, and the reckless boldness that casts reproach in the face of the great Ruler of the universe. In this state of suspense, represented by the doubtful attitude of the Chorus* through the whole play, the present fragment of the great Æschylean Promethiad leaves the well-instructed modern reader; and it admits

* Buck. (Introduction, p. xiii.) has very aptly compared here the position of Antigone in the well-known play of that name, and the half-approving, half-condemning tone of the Chorus in that play.

not, in my view, of a doubt that, in the concluding piece, it remained for the poet to effect a reconciliation between the contending interests and clashing emotions, somewhat after the fashion of which we possess a specimen in the Eumenides. By what agency of individuals or of arguments this was done, it is hopeless now to inquire; the fragmentary notices that remain are too meagre to justify a scientific restoration of the lost drama; they who wish to see what erudite imagination can do in this direction may consult Welcker and Schoemann—WELCKER, in the shape of prose dissertation in his *Trilogie*, p. 28; and SCHOEMANN, in the shape of a poetical restoration of the lost poem, in the Appendix to his very valuable edition of this play. About one thing only can we be certain, that, in the ultimate settlement of disputed claims, neither will Prometheus, on the one hand, be degraded from the high position on which the poet has planted him as a sort of umpire between gods and men, nor will Jove yield one whit of his supreme right to exact the bitterest penalties from man or god who presumes to act independently of, and even in opposition to his will. The tragic poet will duly exercise his grand function of keeping the powers of the celestial world—as he does the contending emotions of the human mind—in due equipoise and subordination.*

The plot of the Prometheus Bound is the simplest possible, being not so much the dramatic progression of a course of events, as a single dramatic situation presented through the whole piece under different aspects. The theft of fire from Heaven, or (as the notice of Cicero seems to indicate) from the Lemnian volcano of Mosychlos,† having been perpetrated in the previous piece, MIGHT and FORCE, two allegorical personages, the ministers of Jove's vengeance, are now introduced, along with HEPHAESTUS, the forger of celestial chains, nailing the benevolent offender to a cold craggy rock in the wastes of European Scythia. In this condition when, after a long silence, he at length gives vent to his complaint, certain kindred divine persons—first, the Oceanides, or daughters of Ocean, and then their hoary sire himself, are brought on the scene, with words of solace and friendly exhortation to the sufferer.‡ When all the arguments that these parties have to advance are exhausted in vain, another mythic personage, of a different character, and for a

* The most remarkable passages of the ancients where reference is made to the *Prometheus Unbound* of Æschylus are:—CICERO, Tusc. II. 10; ARRIAN. Periplus Pont. Eux. p. 19; STRABO, Lib. I. p. 33 and IV. 182-3; PLUTARCHUS. vit. Pompeii, init.; ATHENÆUS. XV. p. 672, Cas.

† "Veniat Æschylus non poeta solum, sed etiam Pythagoreus. Sic enim accepimus. Quo modo fert apud eum Prometheus dolorem, quem excipit *ob furtum Lemnium*."—*Tusc. Quæst.* II. 10, *Welcker, Trilogie*, p. 7.

‡ "*Chorus consilietur amicis.*"—HORACE.

different purpose, appears. This is Io, the daughter of Inachus, the primeval king of Argos, who, having enjoyed the unblissful distinction of stirring the heart of Jove with love, is, by the jealous wrath of Hera, transmuted into the likeness of a cow,* and sent wandering to the ends of the Earth, fretted into restless distraction by the stings of a malignant insect. This character serves a threefold purpose. First, as a sufferer, tracing the origin of all her misery from Jove, she both sympathizes strongly with Prometheus, and exhibits the character of Jove in another unfavourable aspect; secondly, with her wild maniac cries and reinless fits of distraction, she presents a fine contrast to the calm self-possession with which the stout-hearted Titan endures the penalty of his pride; and, in the third place, as the progenitrix of the Argive Hercules, the destined instrument of the delivery of Prometheus, she connects the middle with the concluding piece of the trilogy. Last of all, when this strange apparition has vanished, appears on the scene the great Olympian negotiator, Hermes; who, with the eloquence peculiar to himself, and the threatened terrors of his supreme master, endeavours to break the pride and to bend the will of the lofty-minded offender. In vain. The threatened terrors of the Thunderer now suddenly start into reality; and, amid the roar of contending elements, the pealing Heaven and the quaking Earth, the Jove-defying son of Iapetus descends into Hell.

The superhuman grandeur and high tragic sublimity which belongs to the very conception of this subject, has suffered nothing in respect of treatment from the genius of the bard who dared to handle it. The Prometheus Bound, though inferior in point of lyric richness and variety to the Agamemnon, and though somewhat overloaded with narrative in one place, is nevertheless felt throughout to be one of the most powerful productions of one of the most powerful minds that the history of literature knows. No work of a similar lofty character certainly has ever been so extensively popular. The Prometheus Unbound of Shelley, and Lord Byron's Manfred bear ample witness, of which we may well be proud, to the relationship which exists between the severe Melpomene of ancient Greece and the lofty British Muse.

* On the stage, of course, her transmutation can only be indicated by the presence of a pair of ox horns on her virgin forehead.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Enter MIGHT *and* FORCE, *leading in* PROMETHEUS; HEPHAESTUS, *with chains.*

Might. At length the utmost bound of Earth we've reached,
This Scythian soil, this wild untrodden waste.[1]
Hephaestus now Jove's high behests demand
Thy care; to these steep cliffy rocks bind down
With close-linked chains of during adamant
This daring wretch.[2] For he the bright-rayed fire,
Mother of arts, flower of thy potency,
Filched from the gods, and gave to mortals. Here,
Just guerdon of his sin shall find him; here
Let his pride learn to bow to Jove supreme,
And love men well, but love them not too much.

Heph. Ye twain, rude MIGHT and FORCE, have done your work
To the perfect end; but I—my heart shrinks back
From the harsh task to nail a kindred god[3]
To this storm-battered crag. Yet dare I must.
Where Jove commands, whoso neglects rebels,
And pays the traitor's fine. High-counselled son
Of right-decreeing Themis,[4] I force myself
No less than thee, when to this friendless rock
With iron bonds I chain thee, where nor shape
Nor voice of wandering mortal shall relieve
Thy lonely watch; but the fierce-burning sun
Shall parch and bleach thy fresh complexion. Thou,
When motley-mantled Night * hath hid the day,
Shalt greet the darkness, with how short a joy!
For the morn's sun the nightly dew shall scatter,
And thou be pierced again with the same pricks
Of endless woe—and saviour shall be none.[5]
Such fruits thy forward love to men hath wrought thee.
Thyself a god, the wrath of gods to thee
Seemed little, and to men thou didst dispense
Forbidden gifts. For this thou shalt keep watch

* ἡ ποικιλείμων νύξ. *Buntgewandete*—SCHOL. "*Various-vested Night.*"—COLERIDGE, in a Sonnet to the Autumnal Moon.

On this delightless rock, fixed and erect,
With lid unsleeping, and with knee unbent.
Alas! what groans and wails shalt thou pour forth,
Fruitless. Jove is not weak that he should bend;[6]
For young authority must ever be
Harsh and severe.

Might. Enough of words and tears.
This god, whom all the gods detest, wilt thou
Not hate, thou, whom his impious larceny
Did chiefly injure?

Heph. But, my friend, my kinsman—

Might. True, that respect; but the dread father's word
Respect much more. Jove's word respect and fear.

Heph. Harsh is thy nature, and thy heart is full
Of pitiless daring.

Might. Tears were wasted here,
And labour lost is all concern for him.

Heph. O thrice-cursed trade, that e'er my hand should use it!

Might. Curse not thy craft; the cunning of thy hand
Makes not his woes; he made them for himself.

Heph. Would that some other hand had drawn the lot
To do this deed!

Might. All things may be, but this
To dictate to the gods.[7] There's one that's free,
One only; Jove.

Heph. I know it, and am dumb.

Might. Then gird thee to the work, chain down the culprit,
Lest Jove thy laggard zeal behold, and blame.

Heph. The irons here are ready.

Might. Take them, and strike
Stout blows with the hammer; nail him to the rock.

Heph. The work speeds well, and lingers not.

Might. Strike! strike!
With ring, and clamp, and wedge make sure the work.
He hath a subtle wit will find itself
A way where way is none.

Heph. This arm is fast.

Might. Then clasp this other. Let the sophist know,
Against great Jove how dull a thing is wit.

Heph. None but the victim can reprove my zeal.

Might. Now take this adamantine bolt, and force
Its point resistless through his rebel breast.

Heph. Alas! alas! Prometheus, but I pity thee!

Might. Dost lag again, and for Jove's enemies weep
Fond tears? Beware thou have no cause to weep
Tears for thyself.
Heph. Thou see'st no sightly sight
For eyes to look on.
Might. I behold a sower
Reaping what thing he sowed. But take these thongs,
And bind his sides withal.
Heph. I must! I must!
Nor needs thy urging.
Might. Nay, but I will urge,
Command, and bellow in thine ear! Proceed,
Lower—yet lower—and with these iron rings
Enclasp his legs.
Heph. 'Tis done, and quickly done.
Might. Now pierce his feet through with these nails. Strike hard!
There's one will sternly prove thy work, and thee.
Heph. Harsh is thy tongue, and, like thy nature, hard.
Might. Art thou a weakling, do not therefore blame
The firm harsh-fronted will that suits my office.
Heph. Let us away. He's fettered limb and thew.
Might. There lie, and feed thy pride on this bare rock,
Filching gods' gifts for mortal men. What man
Shall free thee from these woes? Thou hast been called
In vain the Provident:[8] had thy soul possessed
The virtue of thy name, thou hadst foreseen
These cunning toils, and hadst unwound thee from them.

[*Exeunt all, except* PROMETHEUS, *who is left chained.*

Prom.[9] O divine ether, and swift-winged winds,
And river-fountains, and of ocean waves
The multitudinous laughter,[10] and thou Earth,
Boon mother of us all, and thou bright round
Of the all-seeing Sun, you I invoke!
Behold what ignominy of causeless wrongs
I suffer from the gods, myself a god.
See what piercing pains shall goad me
Through long ages myraid-numbered!
With such wrongful chains hath bound me
This new leader of the gods.
Ah me! present woes and future
I bemoan. O! when, O! when
Shall the just redemption dawn

Yet why thus prate? I know what ills await me.
No unexpected torture can surprise
My soul prophetic; and with quiet mind
We all must bear our portioned fate, nor idly
Court battle with a strong necessity.
Alas! alas! 'tis hard to speak to the winds;
Still harder to be dumb! my well-deservings
To mortal men are all the offence that bowed me
Beneath this yoke. The secret fount of fire
I sought, and found, and in a reed concealed it;[11]
Whence arts have sprung to man, and life hath drawn
Rich store of comforts. For such deed I suffer
These bonds, in the broad eye of gracious day,
Here crucified. Ah me! ah me! who comes?[12]
What sound, what viewless breath, thus taints the air,
God sent, or mortal, or of mingled kind?
What errant traveller ill-sped comes to view
This naked ridge of extreme Earth, and me?
Whoe'er thou art, a hapless god thou see'st
Nailed to this crag; the foe of Jove thou seest.
Him thou see'st, whom all the Immortals
Whoso tread the Olympian threshold,
Name with hatred; thou beholdest
Man's best friend, and, therefore, hated
For excess of love.
Hark, again! I hear the whirring
As of winged birds approaching;
With the light strokes of their pinions
Ether pipes ill-boding whispers!—
Alas! alas! that I should fear
Each breath that nears me.

The OCEANIDES *approach, borne through the air in a winged ca*

STROPHE I.

Chorus. Fear nothing; for a friendly band approaches;
Fleet rivalry of wings
Oar'd us to this far height, with hard consent
Wrung from our careful sire
The winds swift-sweeping bore me: for I heard
The harsh hammer's note deep deep in ocean caves,
And, throwing virgin shame aside, unshod
The winged car I mounted.

Prom. Ah! ah!
Daughters of prolific Tethys,[13]
And of ancient father Ocean,
With his sleepless current whirling
Round the firm ball of the globe.
Look! with rueful eyes behold me
Nailed by adamantine rivets,
Keeping weary watch unenvied
On this tempest-rifted rock!

ANTISTROPHE I.

Chorus. I look, Prometheus; and a tearful cloud
My woeful sight bedims,
To see thy goodliest form with insult chained,
In adamantine bonds,
To this bare crag, where pinching airs shall blast thee.
New gods now hold the helm of Heaven; new laws
Mark Jove's unrighteous rule; the giant trace
Of Titan times hath vanished.[14]
Prom. Deep in death-receiving Hades
Had he bound me, had he whelmed me
In Tartarean pit, unfathomed,
Fettered with unyielding bonds!
Then nor god nor man had feasted
Eyes of triumph on my wrongs,
Nor I, thus swung in middle ether,*
Moved the laughter of my foes.

STROPHE II.

Chorus. Which of the gods hath heart so hard
To mock thy woes? Who will withhold
The fellow-feeling and the tear,
Save only Jove. But he doth nurse
Strong wrath within his stubborn breast,
And holds all Heaven in awe.
Nor will he cease till his hot rage is glutted,
Or some new venture shakes his stable throne.
Prom. By my Titan soul, I swear it!
Though with harsh chains now he mocks me,
Even now the hour is ripening,
When this haughty lord of Heaven
Shall embrace my knees, beseeching
Me to unveil the new-forged counsels

* ἀιθέριον κίνυγμα.

That shall hurl him from his throne.[15]
But no honey-tongued persuasion,
No smooth words of artful charming,
No stout threats shall loose my tongue,
Till he loose these bonds of insult,
And himself make just atonement
For injustice done to me.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Chorus. Thou art a bold man, and defiest
The keenest pangs to force thy will.
With a most unreined tongue thou speakest;
But me—sharp fear hath pierced my heart.
I fear for thee: and of thy woes
The distant, doubtful end
I see not. O, 'tis hard, most hard to reach
The heart of Jove![16] prayer beats his ear in vain.

Prom. Harsh is Jove, I know—he frameth
Justice for himself; but soon,
When the destined arm o'ertakes him,
He shall tremble as a child.
He shall smooth his bristling anger,
Courting friendship shunned before,
More importunate to unbind me
Than impatient I of bonds.

Chorus. Speak now, and let us know the whole offence
Jove charges thee withal; for which he seized,
And with dishonor and dire insult loads thee.
Unfold the tale; unless, perhaps, such sorrow
Irks thee to tell.

Prom. To tell or not to tell
Irks me the same; which way I turn is pain.
When first the gods their fatal strife began,
And insurrection raged in Heaven—some striving
To cast old Kronos from his hoary throne,
That Jove might reign, and others to crush i' the bud
His swelling mastery—I wise counsel gave
To the Titans, sons of primal Heaven and Earth;
But gave in vain. Their dauntless stubborn souls
Spurned gentle ways, and patient-working wiles,
Weening swift triumph with a blow. But me,
My mother Themis, not once but oft, and Earth
(One shape of various names),[17] prophetic told

That violence and rude strength in such a strife
Were vain—craft haply might prevail. This lesson
I taught the haughty Titans, but they deigned
Scarce with contempt to hear my prudent words.
Thus baffled in my plans, I deemed it best,
As things then were, leagued with my mother Themis,
To accept Jove's proffered friendship. By my counsels
From his primeval throne was Kronos * hurled
Into the pit Tartarean, dark, profound,
With all his troop of friends. Such was the kindness
From me received by him who now doth hold
The masterdom of Heaven; these the rewards
Of my great zeal: for so it hath been ever.
Suspicion's a disease that cleaves to tyrants,
And they who love most are the first suspected.[18]
As for your question, for what present fault
I bear the wrong that now afflicts me, hear.
Soon as he sat on his ancestral throne
He called the gods together, and assigned
To each his fair allotment, and his sphere
Of sway supreme; but, ah! for wretched man!
To him nor part nor portion fell: Jove vowed
To blot his memory from the Earth, and mould
The race anew. † I only of the gods
Thwarted his will;[19] and, but for my strong aid,
Hades had whelmed, and hopeless ruin swamped
All men that breathe. Such were my crimes: these pains
Grievous to suffer, pitiful to behold,
Were purchased thus; and mercy's now denied
To him whose crime was mercy to mankind:
And here I lie, in cunning torment stretched,[20]
A spectacle inglorious to Jove.

Chorus. An iron-heart were his, and flinty hard,
Who on thy woes could look without a tear,
Prometheus; I had liefer not so seen thee,
And seeing thee fain would call mine eyesight liar.

Prom. Certes no sight am I for friends to look on.

Chorus. Was this thy sole offence?

Prom. I taught weak mortals
Not to foresee harm, and forestall the Fates.

* Saturn the father of Jove.

† "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air: for it repenteth me that I have made him."—Gen. vi. 7.

Chorus. A sore disease to anticipate mischance:
How didst thou cure it?
Prom. Blind hopes of good I planted
In their dark breasts.[21]
Chorus. That was a boon indeed,
To ephemeral man.
Prom. Nay more, I gave them fire.
Chorus. And flame-faced fire is now enjoyed by mortals?[22]
Prom. Enjoyed, and of all arts the destined mother.
Chorus. And is this all the roll of thy offendings
That he should rage so fierce? Hath he not set
Bounds to his vengeance?
Prom. None, but his own pleasure.
Chorus. And when shall he please? Vain the hope; thou see'
That thou hast erred; and that thou hast to us
No pleasure brings, to thee excess of pain.
Of this enough. Seek now to cure the evil.
Prom. 'Tis a light thing for him whose foot's unwarped
By misadventure's meshes to advise
And counsel the unfortunate. But I
Foreknew my fate, and if I erred, I erred
With conscious purpose, purchasing man's weal
With mine own grief. I knew I should offend
The Thunderer, though deeming not that he
Would perch me thus to pine 'twixt Earth and Sky,
Of this wild wintry waste sole habitant.
But cease to weep for ills that weeping mends not;
Descend, and I'll discourse to thee at length
Of chances yet to come. Nay, do not doubt;
But leave thy car, nor be ashamed to share
The afflictions of the afflicted; for Mishap,
Of things that lawless wander, wanders most;
With me to-day it is with you to-morrow.
Chorus. Not to sluggish ears, Prometheus,
Hast thou spoken thy desire;
From our breeze-borne car descending,
With light foot we greet the ground.
Leaving ether chaste, smooth pathway
Of the gently-winnowing wing,
On this craggy rock I stand,
To hear the tale, while thou mayst tell it,
Of thy sorrows to the end.

Enter OCEAN.[23]

Ocean. From my distant caves cerulean[24]
This fleet-pinioned bird hath borne me;
Needed neither bit nor bridle,
Thought instinctive reined the creature;
Thus, to know thy griefs, Prometheus,
And to grieve with thee I come.
Soothly strong the tie of kindred
Binds the heart of man and god;
But, though no such tie had bound me,
I had wept for thee the same.
Well thou know'st not mine the cunning
To discourse with glozing phrase:
Tell me how I may relieve thee,
I am ready to relieve;
Friend thou boastest none than Ocean
Surer, in the hour of need.

Prom. How now, old Ocean? thou too come to view
My dire disasters?—how shouldst thou have dared,
Leaving the billowy stream whose name thou bearest,
Thy rock-roofed halls, and self-built palaces,
To visit this Scythian land, stern mother of iron,
To know my sorrows, and to grieve with me?
Look on this sight—thy friend, the friend of Jove,
Who helped him to the sway which now he bears,
Crushed by the self-same god himself exalted.

Ocean. I see, Prometheus; and I come to speak
A wise word to the wise; receive it wisely.
Know what thou art, and make thy manners new;
For a new king doth rule the subject gods.
Compose thy speech, nor cast such whetted words
'Gainst Jove, who, though he sits apart sublime.
Hath ears, and with new pains may smite his victim,
To which his present wrath shall seem a toy.
Listen to me; slack thy fierce ire, and seek
Speedy deliverance from these woes. Trite wisdom
Belike I speak, Prometheus; but thou knowest
A lofty-sounding tongue with passionate phrase
Buys its own ruin. Proud art thou, unyielding,
And heap'st new woes tenfold on thine own head.
Why should'st thou kick against the pricks? Jove reigns
A lord severe, and of his acts need give

Account to none. I go to plead for thee,
And, what I can, will try to save my kinsman;
But be thou calm the while; curb thy rash speech,
And let not fame report, that one so wise
Fell by the forfeit of a foolish tongue.

Prom. Count thyself happy, Ocean, being free
From blame, who shared and dared with me. Be wise,
And what thy meddling aids not, let alone.
In vain thou plead'st with him; his ears are deaf.
Look to thyself: thy errand is not safe.

Ocean. Wise art thou, passing wise, for others' weal,
For thine own good most foolish. Prithee do not
So stretch thy stubborn whim to pull against
The friends that pull for thee. 'Tis no vain boast;
I know that Jove will hear me.

Prom. Thou art kind;
And for thy kind intent and friendly feeling
Have my best thanks. But do not, I beseech thee,
Waste labour upon me. If thou wilt labour,
Seek a more hopeful subject. Thou wert wiser,
Being safe, to keep thee safe. I, when I suffer,
Wish not that all my friends should suffer with me.
Enough my brother Atlas' miseries grieve me.[25]
Who in the extreme West stands, stoutly bearing
The pillars of Heaven and Earth upon his shoulders,[26]
No lightsome burden. Him too, I bewail,
That made his home in dark Cilician caverns.
The hostile portent, Earth-born, hundred-headed
Impetuous Typhon,[27] quelled by force, who stood
Alone, against the embattled host of gods,
Hissing out murder from his monstrous jaws;
And from his eyes there flashed a Gorgon glare,
As he would smite the tyranny of great Jove
Clean down; but he, with sleepless thunder watching,
Hurl'd headlong a flame-breathing bolt, and laid
The big-mouthed vaunter low. Struck to the heart
With blasted strength, and shrunk to ashes, there
A huge and helpless hulk, outstretched he lies,
Beside the salt sea's strait, pressed down beneath
The roots of Ætna, on whose peaks Hephaestus
Sits hammering the hot metal. Thence, one day,
Shall streams of liquid fire, swift passage forcing,
With savage jaws the wide-spread plains devour

Of the fair-fruited Sicilly. Such hot shafts,
From the flame-breathing ferment of the deep,
Shall Typhon cast with sateless wrath, though now
All scorched and cindered by the Thunderer's stroke,
Moveless he lies. But why should I teach thee?
Thou art a wise man, thine own wisdom use
To save thyself. For me, I'll even endure
These pains, till Jove shall please to slack his ire.

Ocean. Know'st thou not this, Prometheus, that mild words
Are medicines of fierce wrath? [28]

Prom. They are, when spoken
In a mild hour; but the high-swelling heart
They do but fret the more.

Ocean. But, in the attempt
To ward the threatened harm, what evil see'st thou?

Prom. Most bootless toil, and folly most inane.

Ocean. Be it so; but yet 'tis sometimes well, believe me,
That a wise man should seem to be a fool.

Prom. Seem fool, seem wise, I, in the end, am blamed.

Ocean. Thy reckless words reluctant send me home.

Prom. Beware, lest love for me make thyself hated.

Ocean. Of whom? Of him, who, on the all-powerful throne
Sits, a new lord?

Prom. Even him. Beware thou vex not
Jove's jealous heart.

Ocean. In this, thy fate shall warn me.

Prom. Away! farewell; and may the prudent thoughts,
That sway thy bosom now, direct thee ever.

Ocean. I go, and quickly. My four-footed bird
Brushes the broad path of the limpid air
With forward wing: right gladly will he bend
The wearied knee on his familiar stall.

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

Thy dire disasters, unexampled wrongs,
I weep, Prometheus.
From its soft founts distilled the flowing tear
My cheek bedashes.
'Tis hard, most hard! By self-made laws Jove rules,
And 'gainst the host of primal gods he points
The lordly spear.

ANTISTROPHE I.

With echoing groans the ambient waste bewails
Thy fate, Prometheus;
The neighbouring tribes of holy Asia weep
For thee, Prometheus;
For thee and thine! names mighty and revered
Of yore, now shamed, dishonoured, and cast down,
And chained with thee.

STROPHE II.

And Colchis, with her belted daughters, weeps
For thee, Prometheus;
And Scythian tribes, on Earth's remotest verge,
Where lone Mæotis* spreads her wintry waters,
Do weep for thee.

ANTISTROPHE II.

The flower of Araby's wandering warriors weep
For thee, Prometheus;
And they who high their airy holds have perched
On Caucasus' ridge, with pointed lances bristling,
Do weep for thee.

EPODE.

One only vexed like thee, and even as thou,
In adamant bound,
A Titan, and a god scorned by the gods,
Atlas I knew.
He on his shoulders the surpassing weight
Of the celestial pole stoutly upbore,
And groaned beneath.
Roars billowy Ocean, and the Deep sucks back
Its waters when he sobs; from Earth's dark caves
Deep hell resounds;
The fountains of the holy-streaming rivers
Do moan with him.

Prom. Deem me not self-willed, nor with pride high-strung,
That I am dumb; my heart is gnawed to see
Myself thus mocked and jeered. These gods, to whom
Owe they their green advancement but to me?
But this ye know; and, not to téach the taught,
I'll speak of it no more. Of human kind,
My great offence in aiding them, in teaching

* The Sea of Azof.

The babe to speak, and rousing torpid mind
To take the grasp of itself—of this I'll talk;
Meaning to mortal men no blame, but only
The true recital of mine own deserts.
For, soothly, having eyes to see they saw not,[31]
And hearing heard not; but like dreamy phantoms,
A random life they led from year to year,
All blindly floundering on. No craft they knew
With woven brick or jointed beam to pile
The sunward porch; but in the dark earth burrowed
And housed, like tiny ants in sunless caves.
No signs they knew to mark the wintry year:
The flower-strewn Spring, and the fruit-laden Summer,
Uncalendared, unregistered, returned—
Till I the difficult art of the stars revealed,
Their risings and their settings. Numbers, too,
I taught them (a most choice device)[32] and how
By marshalled signs to fix their shifting thoughts,
That Memory, mother of Muses, might achieve
Her wondrous works. I first slaved to the yoke
Both ox and ass. I, the rein-loving steeds
(Of wealth's gay-flaunting pomp the chiefest pride)
Joined to the car; and bade them ease the toils
Of labouring men vicarious. I the first
Upon the lint-winged car of mariner
Was launched, sea-wandering. Such wise arts I found
To soothe the ills of man's ephemeral life;
But for myself, plunged in this depth of woe,
No prop I find.

Chorus. Sad chance! Thy wit hath slipt
From its firm footing then when needed most,
Like some unlearned leech who many healed,
But being sick himself, from all his store,
Cannot cull out one medicinal drug.

Prom. Hear me yet farther; and in hearing marvel,
What arts and curious shifts my wit devised.
Chiefest of all, the cure of dire disease
Men owe to me. Nor healing food, nor drink,
Nor unguent knew they, but did slowly wither
And waste away for lack of pharmacy,
Till taught by me to mix the soothing drug,
And check corruption's march. I fixed the art
Of divination with its various phase

Of dim revealings, making dreams speak truth,
Stray voices, and encounters by the way
Significant; the flight of taloned birds
On right and left I marked—these fraught with ban,
With blissful augury those; their way of life,
Their mutual loves and enmities, their flocks,
And friendly gatherings; the entrails' smoothness,
The hue best liked by the gods, the gall, the liver
With all its just proportions. I first wrapped
In the smooth fat the thighs; first burnt the loins,
And from the flickering flame taught men to spell
No easy lore, and cleared the fire-faced signs [33]
Obscure before. Yet more: I probed the Earth,
To yield its hidden wealth to help man's weakness—
Iron, copper, silver, gold. None but a fool,
A prating fool, will stint me of this praise.
And thus, with one short word to sum the tale,
Prometheus taught all arts to mortal men.

Chorus. Do good to men, but do it with discretion.
Why shouldst thou harm thyself? Good hope I nurse
To see thee soon from these harsh chains unbound,
As free, as mighty, as great Jove himself.

Prom. This may not be; the destined course of things
Fate must accomplish; I must bend me yet
'Neath wrongs on wrongs, ere I may 'scape these bonds.
Though Art be strong, Necessity is stronger.

Chorus. And who is lord of strong Necessity? [34]

Prom. The triform Fates, and the sure-memoried Furies.

Chorus. And mighty Jove himself must yield to them?

Prom. No more than others Jove can 'scape his doom.[35]

Chorus. What doom?—No doom hath he but endless sway.

Prom. 'Tis not for thee to know: tempt not the question.

Chorus. There's some dread mystery in thy chary speech,
Close-veiled.

Prom. Urge this no more: the truth thou'lt know
In fitting season; now it lies concealed
In deepest darkness! for relenting Jove
Himself must woo this secret from my breast.

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

Never, O never may Jove,
Who in Olympus reigns omnipotent lord,

Plant his high will against my weak opinion![36]
Let me approach the gods
With blood of oxen and with holy feasts,
By father Ocean's quenchless stream, and pay
No backward vows:
Nor let my tongue offend; but in my heart
Be lowly wisdom graven.

ANTISTROPHE I.

For thus old Wisdom speaks:
Thy life 'tis sweet to cherish, and while the length
Of years is thine, thy heart with cheerful hopes
And lightsome joys to feed.
But thee—ah me! my blood runs cold to see thee,
Pierced to the marrow with a thousand pains.
Not fearing Jove,
Self-willed thou hast respect to man, Prometheus,
Much more than man deserveth.

STROPHE II.

For what is man?* behold!
Can he requite thy love—child of a day—
Or help thy extreme need? Hast thou not seen
The blind and aimless strivings,
The barren blank endeavour,
The pithless deeds, of the fleeting dreamlike race?
Never, O nevermore,
May mortal wit Jove's ordered plan deceive.

ANTISTROPHE II.

This lore my heart hath learned
From sight of thee, and thy sharp pains, Prometheus.
Alas! what diverse strain I sang thee then,
Around the bridal chamber,
And around the bridal bath,
When thou my sister fair, Hesione,
Won by rich gifts didst lead[37]
From Ocean's caves thy spousal bed to share.

Enter Io.[38]

What land is this?—what race of mortals
Owns this desert? who art thou,

* "Of all the things that breathe the air, and creep upon the Earth,
The weakest thing that breathes and creeps on nurturing Earth is Man."
HOMER'S ODYS. xviii. 130.

Rock-bound with these wintry fetters,
And for what crime tortured thus?
Worn and weary with far travel,
Tell me where my feet have borne me!
O pain! pain! pain! it stings and goads me again,
The fateful brize!—save me, O Earth![39]—Avaunt
Thou horrible shadow of the Earth-born Argus!
Could not the grave close up thy hundred eyes,
But thou must come,
Haunting my path with thy suspicious look,
Unhoused from Hades?
Avaunt! avaunt!—why wilt thou hound my track,
The famished wanderer on the waste sea-shore?

STROPHE.

Pipe not thy sounding wax-compacted reed
With drowsy drone at me! Ah wretched me!
Wandering, still wandering o'er wide Earth, and driven
Where? where? O tell me where?
O Son of Kronos, in what damned sin
Being caught hast thou to misery yoked me thus,
Pricked me to desperation, and my heart
Pierced with thy furious goads?
Blast me with lightnings! bury me in Earth! To the gape
Of greedy sea-monsters give me! Hear, O hear
My prayer, O King!
Enough, enough, these errant toils have tried me;
And yet no rest I find: nor when, nor where
These woes shall cease may know.

Chorus.[40] Dost hear the plaint of the ox-horned maid?

Prom. How should I not? the Inachian maid who knows not,
Stung by the god-sent brize? the maid who smote
Jove's lustful heart with love: and his harsh spouse
Hounds her o'er Earth with chase interminable.

ANTISTROPHE.

Io. My father's name thou know'st, and my descent!
Who art thou? god or mortal? Speak! what charm
Gives wretch like thee, the certain clue to know
My lamentable fate?
Aye, and the god-sent plague thou know'st; the sting
That spurs me o'er the far-stretched Earth; the goad
That mads me sheer, wastes, withers, and consumes,
A worn and famished maid,

Whipt by the scourge of jealous Hera's wrath!
Ah me! ah me! Misery has many shapes,
But none like mine.
O thou, who named my Argive home, declare
What ills await me yet; what end; what hope?
If hope there be for Io.

Chorus. I pray thee speak to the weary way-worn maid.

Prom. I'll tell thee all thy wish, not in enigmas
Tangled and dark, but in plain phrase, as friend
Should speak to friend. Thou see'st Prometheus, who
To mortal men gifted immortal fire.

Io. O thou, to man a common blessing given,
What crime hath bound thee to this wintry rock?

Prom. I have but ceased rehearsing all my wrongs.

Io. And dost thou then refuse the boon I ask?

Prom. What boon? ask what thou wilt, and I will answer.

Io. Say, then, who bound thee to this ragged cliff?

Prom. Stern Jove's decree, and harsh Hephaestus' hand.

Io. And for what crime?

Prom. Let what I've said suffice.

Io. This, too, I ask—what bound hath fate appointed
To my far-wandering toils?

Prom. This not to know
Were better than to learn.

Io. Nay, do not hide
This thing from me!

Prom. If 'tis a boon, believe me,
I grudge it not.

Io. Then why so slow to answer?

Prom. I would not crush thee with the cruel truth.

Io. Fear not; I choose to hear it.

Prom. Listen then.

Chorus. Nay, hear me rather. With her own mouth this maid
Shall first her bygone woes rehearse; next thou
What yet remains shalt tell.

Prom. Even so. [*To Io.*] Speak thou;
They are the sisters of thy father, Io;[41]
And to wail out our griefs, when they who listen
Our troubles with a willing tear requite,
Is not without its use.

Io. I will obey,
And in plain speech my chanceful story tell;
Though much it grieves me to retrace the source,

Whence sprung this god-sent pest, and of my shape
Disfigurement abhorred. Night after night
Strange dreams around my maiden pillow hovering
Whispered soft temptings. "*O thrice-blessed maid,*
Why pin'st thou thus in virgin loneliness,
When highest wedlock courts thee? Struck by the shaft
Of fond desire for thee Jove burns, and pants
To twine his loves with thine. Spurn not, O maid,
The proffered bed of Jove; but hie thee straight
To Lerne's bosomed mead,[42] *where are the sheep-folds*
And ox-stalls of thy sire, that so the eye
Of Jove, being filled with thee, may cease from craving."
Such nightly dreams my restless couch possessed
Till I, all tears, did force me to unfold
The portent to my father. He to Pytho*
Sent frequent messengers, and to Dodona,
Searching the pleasure of the gods; but they
With various-woven phrase came back, and answers
More doubtful than the quest. At length, a clear
And unambiguous voice came to my father,
Enjoining, with most strict command, to send me
Far from my home, and from my country far,
To the extreme bounds of Earth an outcast wanderer,
Else that the fire-faced bolt of Jove should smite
Our universal race. By such responses,
Moved of oracular Loxias, my father
Reluctant me reluctant drove from home,
And shut the door against me. What he did
He did perforce; Jove's bit was in his mouth.
Forthwith my wit was frenzied, and my form
Assumed the brute. With maniac bound I rushed,
Horned as thou see'st, and with the sharp-mouthed sting
Of gad-fly pricked infuriate to the cliff
Of Lerne, and Cenchréa's limpid wave;
While Argus, Earth-born cow-herd, hundred-eyed,
Followed the winding traces of my path
With sharp observance. Him swift-swooping Fate
Snatched unexpected from his sleepless guard;
But I from land to land still wander on,
Scourged by the wrath of Heaven's relentless Queen.
Thou hast my tale; the sequel, if thou know'st it,
Is thine to tell; but do not seek, I pray thee,

* *i.e.* Delphi.—See Schol. to Iliad II. 519.

In pity for me, to drop soft lies; for nothing
Is worse than the smooth craft of practised phrase.
Chorus. Enough, enough! Woe's me that ever
Such voices of strange grief should rend my ear!
That such a tale of woe,
Insults, and wrongs, and horrors, should freeze me through
As with a two-edged sword!
O destiny! destiny! woes most hard to see,
More hard to bear! Alas! poor maid for thee!
Prom. Thy wails anticipate her woes; restrain
Thy trembling tears till thou hast heard the whole.
Chorus. Proceed: to know the worst some solace brings
To the vexed heart.
Prom. Your first request I granted,
And lightly; from her own mouth, ye have heard
The spring of harm, the stream expect from me,
How Hera shall draw out her slow revenge.
Meanwhile, thou seed of Inachus, lend an ear
And learn thy future travel. First to the east [43]
Turn thee, and traverse the unploughed Scythian fields,
Whose wandering tribes their wattled homes transport
Aloft on well-wheeled wains, themselves well slung
With the far-darting bow. These pass, and, holding
Thy course by the salt sea's sounding surge, pass through
The land; next, on thy left, thou'lt reach the Chalybs,
Workers in iron. These too avoid—for they
Are savage, and harsh to strangers. Thence proceeding,
Thou to a stream shalt come, not falsely named
Hubristes: but the fierce ill-forded wave
Pass not till Caucasus, hugest hill, receives thee,
There where the flood its gushing strength foams forth
Fresh from the rocky brow. Cross then the peaks
That neighbour with the stars, and thence direct
Southward thy path to where the Amazons
Dwell, husband-hated, who shall one day people
Thermódon's bank, and Themiscyre, and where
Harsh Salmydessus whets his ravening jaws,
The sailor's foe, stepmother to the ships.
These maids shall give thee escort. Next thou'lt reach
The narrow Cimmerian isthmus, skirting bleak
The waters of Mæotis. Here delay not,
But with bold breast cross thou the strait. Thy passage
Linked with the storied name of Bosphorus

Shall live through endless time. Here, leaving Europe,
The Asian soil receives thee. Now, answer me,
Daughters of Ocean, doth not Jove in all things
Prove his despotic will?—In lawless love
Longing to mingle with this mortal maid,
He heaps her with these woes. A bitter suitor,
Poor maid, was thine, and I have told thee scarce
The prelude of thy griefs.

Io. Ah! wretched me!

Prom. Alas, thy cries and groans!—What wilt thou do,
When the full measure of thy woes is told thee?

Chorus. What! more? her cup of woes not full?

Prom. 'Twill flow
And overflow, a sea of whelming woes.

Io. Why do I live? Why not embrace the gain
That, with one cast, this toppling cliff secures,
And dash me headlong on the ground, to end
Life and life's sorrows? Once to die is better
Than thus to drag sick life.

Prom. Thou'rt happy, Io,
That death from all thy living wrongs may free thee;
But I, whom Fate hath made immortal, see
No end to my long-lingering pains appointed,
Till Jove from his usurping sway be hurled.

Io. Jove from his tyranny hurled—can such thing be?

Prom. Doubtless 'twould feast thine eyes to see't?

Io. Ay, truly,
Wronged as I am by him.

Prom. Then, learn from me
That he is doomed to fall.

Io. What hand shall wrest
Jove's sceptre?

Prom. Jove's own empty wit.

Io. How so?

Prom. From evil marriage reaping evil fruit.

Io. Marriage! of mortal lineage or divine?

Prom. Ask me no further. This I may not answer.

Io. Shall his spouse thrust him from his ancient throne?

Prom. The son that she brings forth shall wound his father.

Io. And hath he no redemption from this doom?

Prom. None, till he loose me from these hated bonds.

Io. But who, in Jove's despite, shall loose thee?

Prom. One

From thine own womb descended.

Io. How? My Son?
One born of me shall be thy Saviour!—When?

Prom. When generations ten have passed, the third.[44]

Io. Thou speak'st ambiguous oracles.

Prom. I have spoken
Enough for thee. Pry not into the Fates.

Io. Wilt thou hold forth a hope to cheat my grasp?

Prom. I give thee choice of two things: choose thou one.

Io. What things? Speak, and I'll choose.

Prom. Thou hast the choice
To hear thy toils to the end, or learn his name
Who comes to save me.

Chorus. Nay, divide the choice;
One half to her concede, to me the other,
Thus doubly gracious: to the maid her toils,
To me thy destined Saviour tell.

Prom. So be it!
Being thus whetted in desire, I would not
Oppose your wills. First Io, what remains
Of thy far-sweeping wanderings hear, and grave
My words on the sure tablets of thy mind.
When thou hast crossed the narrow stream that parts[45]
The continents, to the far flame-faced East
Thou shalt proceed, the highway of the Sun;
Then cross the sounding Ocean, till thou reach
Cisthené and the Gorgon plains, where dwell
Phorcys' three daughters, maids with frosty eld
Hoar as the swan, with one eye and one tooth
Shared by the three; them Phœbus beamy-bright
Beholds not, nor the nightly Moon. Near them
Their winged sisters dwell, the Gorgons dire,
Man-hating monsters, snaky-locked, whom eye
Of mortal ne'er might look upon and live.
This for thy warning. One more sight remains,
That fills the eye with horror: mark me well;
The sharp-beaked Griffins, hounds of Jove, avoid.
Fell dogs that bark not; and the one-eyed host
Of Arimaspian horsemen with swift hoofs
Beating the banks of golden-rolling Pluto.
A distant land, a swarthy people next
Receives thee: near the fountains of the Sun
They dwell by Aethiops' wave. This river trace

Until thy weary feet shall reach the pass
Whence from the Bybline heights the sacred Nile
Pours his salubrious flood.[46] The winding wave
Thence to triangled Egypt guides thee, where
A distant home awaits thee, fated mother
Of no unstoried race. And now, if aught
That I have spoken doubtful seem or dark,
Repeat the question, and in plainer speech
Expect reply. I feel no lack of leisure.

Chorus. If thou hast more to speak to her, speak on;
Or aught omitted to supply, supply it;
But if her tale is finished, as thou say'st,
Remember our request.

Prom. Her tale is told,
But for the more assurance of my words
The path of toils through which her feet had struggled
Before she reached this coast I will declare;
Lightly, and with no cumbrous comment, touching
Thy latest travel only, wandering Io.
When thou hadst trod the Molossian plains, and reached
Steep-ridged Dodona, where Thesprotian Jove
In council sits, and from the articulate oaks
(Strange wonder!) speaks prophetic, there thine ears
This salutation with no doubtful phrase
Received: "*All hail, great spouse of mighty Jove*
That shall be!"—say, was it a pleasing sound?
Thence by the sting of jealous Hera goaded,
Along the coast of Rhea's bosomed sea *
Thy steps were driven: thence with mazy course
Tossed hither;[47] gaining, if a gain, this solace,
That future times, by famous Io's name,
Shall know that sea.† These things may be a sign
That I, beyond the outward show, can pierce
To the heart of truth. What yet remains, I tell
To thee and them in common, tracing back
My speech to whence it came. There is a city
In extreme Egypt, where with outspread loam
Nile breasts the sea, its name Canopus. There
Jove to thy sober sense shall bring thee back,
Soft with no fearful touch, and thou shalt bear
A son, dark Epaphus, whose name shall tell
The wonder of his birth;[48] he shall possess

* Rhea's bosomed sea—the Hadriatic. † The Ionian sea.

What fruitful fields fat Nile broad-streaming laves.
Four generations then shall pass; the fifth
In fifty daughters * glorying shall return
To ancient Argos, fatal wedlock shunning
With fathers' brothers' sons; these, their wild hearts
Fooled with blind lust, as hawks the gentle doves,
Shall track the fugitive virgins; but a god
Shall disappoint their chase, and the fair prey
Save from their lawless touch; the Apian soil
Shall welcome them to death, and woman's hands
Shall dare the deed amid the nuptial watches.
Each bride shall rob her lord of life, and dip
The sharp steel in his throat. Such nuptial bliss
May all my enemies know! Only one maid
Of all the fifty, with a blunted will,
Shall own the charm of love, and spare her mate,
And of two adverse reputations choose
The coward, not the murderess. She shall be
The mother of a royal race in Argos.
To tell what follows, with minute remark,
Were irksome; but from this same root shall spring
A hero, strong in the archer's craft, whose hand
Shall free me from these bonds. Such oracle spake
Titanian Themis, my time-honoured mother,
But how and why were a long tale to tell,
Nor being told would boot thine ear to hear it.

Io. Ah me! pain! pain! ah me!
Again the fevered spasm hath seized me,
And the stroke of madness smites!
Again that fiery sting torments me,
And my heart doth knock my ribs!
My aching eyes in dizziness roll,
And my helmless feet are driven
Whither gusty frenzy blows!
And my tongue with thick words struggling
Like a sinking swimmer plashes
'Gainst the whelming waves of woe! [*Exit.*

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE.

Wise was the man, most wise,
Who in deep-thoughted mood conceived, and first

* The Danaids, daughters of Danaus, who colonized Argos from Egypt. This forms the subject of the next play—the Suppliants.

In pictured speech and pregnant phrase declared
That marriage, if the Fates shall bless the bond,
Must be of like with like;
And that the daughters of an humble house
Shun tempting union with the pomp of wealth
And with the pride of birth.

ANTISTROPHE.

Never, O! never may Fate,
All-powerful Fate which rules both gods and men,
See me approaching the dread Thunderer's bed,
And sharing marriage with the Olympian king,
An humble Ocean-maid!
May wretched Io, chased by Hera's wrath,
Unhusbanded, unfriended, fill my sense
With profitable fear.

EPODE.

Me may an equal bond
Bind with my equal: never may the eye
Of a celestial suitor fix the gaze
Of forceful love on me.
This were against all odds of war to war,
And in such strife entangled I were lost;
For how should humble maid resist the embrace,
Against great Jove's decree?

Prom. Nay, but this Jove, though insolent now, shall soon
Be humbled low. Such wedlock even now
He blindly broods, as shall uptear his kingdom,
And leave no trace behind; then shall the curse,
Which Kronos heaped upon his ingrate son,
When hurled unjustly from his hoary throne,
Be all fulfilled. What remedy remains
For that dread ruin I alone can tell;
I only know. Then let him sit aloft,
Rolling his thunder, his fire-breathing bolt
Far-brandishing; his arts are vain; his fall,
Unless my aid prevent, his shameful fall,
Is doomed. Against himself to life he brings
A champion fierce, a portent of grim war,
Who shall invent a fiercer flame than lightning,
And peals to outpeal the thunder, who shall shiver
The trident mace that stirs the sea, and shakes
The solid Earth, the spear of strong Poseidon.

Thus shall the tyrant learn how much to serve
Is different from to sway.
Chorus. Thou dost but make
Thy wishes father to thy slanderous phrase.
Prom. I both speak truth and wish the truth to be.
Chorus. But who can think that Jove shall find a master?
Prom. He shall be mastered! Ay, and worse endure.
Chorus. Dost thou not blench to cast such words about thee?
Prom. How should I fear, being a god and deathless?
Chorus. But he can scourge with something worse than death.
Prom. Even let him scourge! I'm armed for all conclusions.
Chorus. Yet they are wise who worship Adrastéa.[49]
Prom. Worship, and pray; fawn on the powers that be;
But Jove to me is less than very nothing.
Let him command, and rule his little hour
To please himself; long time he cannot sway.
But lo! where comes the courier of this Jove,
The obsequious minion of this upstart King,
Doubtless the bearer of some weighty news.

Enter HERMES.

Hermes. Thee, cunning sophist, dealing bitter words
Most bitterly against the gods, the friend
Of ephemeral man, the thief of sacred fire,
Thee, Father Jove commands to curb thy boasts,
And say what marriage threats his stable throne.
Answer this question in plain phrase, no dark
Tangled enigmas; do not add, Prometheus,
A second journey to my first: and, mark me!
Thy obduracy cannot soften Jove.
Prom. This solemn mouthing, this proud pomp of phrase
Beseems the lackey of the gods. New gods
Ye are, and, being new, ye ween to hold
Unshaken citadels. Have I not seen
Two Monarchs ousted from that throne? the third
I yet shall see precipitate hurled from Heaven
With baser, speedier, ruin. Do I seem
To quail before this new-forged dynasty?
Fear is my farthest thought. I pray thee go
Turn up the dust again upon the road
Thou cam'st. Reply from me thou shalt have none.
Hermes. This haughty tone hath been thy sin before:
Thy pride will strand thee on a worser woe.

Prom. And were my woe tenfold what now it is,
I would not barter it for thy sweet chains;
For liefer would I lackey this bare rock
Than trip the messages of Father Jove.
The insolent thus with insolence I repay.
Hermes. Thou dost delight in miseries; thou art wanton.
Prom. Wanton! delighted! would my worst enemies
Might wanton in these bonds, thyself the first!
Hermes. Must I, too, share the blame of thy distress?
Prom. In one round sentence, every god I hate
That injures me who never injured him.
Hermes. Thou'rt mad, clean mad; thy wit's diseased, Prometheus
Prom. Most mad! if madness 'tis to hate our foes.
Hermes. Prosperity's too good for thee: thy temper
Could not endure't.
Prom. Alas! this piercing pang!
Hermes. "Alas!"—this word Jove does not understand.
Prom, As Time grows old he teaches many things.
Hermes. Yet Time that teaches all leaves thee untaught.
Prom. Untaught in sooth, thus parleying with a slave!
Hermes. It seems thou wilt not grant great Jove's demand.
Prom. Such love as his to me should be repaid
With like!
Hermes. Dost beard me like a boy? Beware.
Prom. Art not a boy, and something yet more witless,
If thou expectest answer from my mouth?
Nor insult harsh, nor cunning craft of Jove
Shall force this tale from me, till he unloose
These bonds. Yea! let him dart his levin bolts,
With white-winged snows and subterranean thunders
Mix and confound the elements of things!
No threat, no fear, shall move me to reveal
The hand that hurls him from his tyrant's throne.
Hermes. Bethink thee well: thy vaunts can help thee nothing.
Prom. I speak not rashly: what I said I said.
Hermes. If thou art not the bought and sold of folly,
Dare to learn wisdom from thy present ills.
Prom. Speak to the waves: thou speak'st to me as vainly!
Deem not that I, to win a smile from Jove,
Will spread a maiden smoothness o'er my soul,
And importune the foe whom most I hate
With womanish upliftings of the hands.
Thou'lt see the deathless die first!

Hermes. I have said
Much, but that much is vain: thy rigid nature
To thaw with prayer is hopeless. A young colt
That frets the bit, and fights against the reins,
Art thou, fierce-champing with most impotent rage;
For wilful strength that hath no wisdom in it
Is less than nothing.[50] But bethink thee well;
If thou despise my words of timely warning,
What wintry storm, what threefold surge of woes
Whelms thee inevitable. Jove shall split
These craggy cliffs with his cloud-bosomed bolt,
And sink thee deep: the cold rock shall embrace thee;
There thou shalt lie, till he shall please to bring thee
Back to the day, to find new pains prepared:
For he will send his Eagle-messenger,
His winged hound,* in crimson food delighting,
To tear thy rags of flesh with bloody beak,
And daily come an uninvited guest
To banquet on thy gory liver. This,
And worse expect, unless some god endure
Vicarious thy tortures,[51] and exchange
His sunny ether for the rayless homes
Of gloomy Hades, and deep Tartarus.
Consider well. No empty boast I speak,
But weighty words well weighed: the mouth of Jove
Hath never known a lie, and speech with him
Is prophet of its deed. Ponder and weigh,
Close not thy stubborn ears to good advice.

Chorus. If we may speak, what Hermes says is wise,
And fitting the occasion. He advises
That stubborn will should yield to prudent counsel.
Obey: thy wisdom should not league with folly.

Prom. Nothing new this preacher preaches:
Seems it strange that foe should suffer
From the vengeance of his foe?
I am ready. Let him wreathe
Curls of scorching flame around me;
Let him fret the air with thunder,
And the savage-blustering winds!
Let the deep abysmal tempest
Wrench the firm roots of the Earth!
Let the sea upheave her billows,

* See the Agamemnon, Note 15.

Mingling the fierce rush of waters
With the pathway of the stars!
Let the harsh-winged hurricane sweep me
In its whirls, and fling me down
To black Tartarus: there to lie
Bound in the iron folds of Fate.
I will bear: but cannot die.

Hermes. Whom the nymphs have struck with madness
Raves as this loud blusterer raves;
Seems he not a willing madman,
Let him reap the fruits he sowed![52]
But ye maids, who share his sorrows,
Not his crimes, with quick removal
Hie from this devoted spot,
Lest with idiocy the thunder
Harshly blast your maundering wits.

Chorus. Wouldst thou with thy words persuade us,
Use a more persuasive speech;
Urge no reasons to convince me
That an honest heart must hate.
With his sorrows I will sorrow:
I will hate a traitor's name;
Earth has plagues, but none more noisome
Than a faithless friend in need.

Hermes. Ponder well my prudent counsel,
Nor, when evil hunts thee out,
Blame great Jove that he doth smite thee
With an unexpected stroke.
Not the gods; thy proper folly
Is the parent of thy woes.*
Jove hath laid no trap to snare thee,
But the scapeless net of ruin
Thou hast woven for thyself.

Prom. Now his threats walk forth in action,
And the firm Earth quakes indeed.
Deep and loud the ambient Thunder
Bellows, and the flaring Lightning
Wreathes his fiery curls around me,
And the Whirlwind rolls his dust;
And the Winds from rival regions
Rush in elemental strife,
And the Ocean's storm-vexed billows

* Compare Odyssey, I. 32.

Mingle with the startled stars!
Doubtless now the tyrant gathers
All his hoarded wrath to whelm me.
Mighty Mother, worshipped Themis,
Circling Ether that diffusest
Light, a common joy to all,
Thou beholdest these my wrongs!

THE SUPPLIANTS

A LYRICO-DRAMATIC SPECTACLE

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby
Some have entertained angels unawares.

St. Paul.

πρὸς γὰρ Διός εἰσιν ἅπαντες
Ξεῖνοί τε πτωχοί τε.

Homer.

PERSONS

CHORUS OF DANAIDES.

DANAUS.

PELASGUS, King of Argos, and Attendants.

HERALD.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

DANAUS, according to the received Greek story, was an Egyptian, who founded a colony in Argos, at some date between the age of the oldest Argive king Inachus, and the Trojan war. In the reality of this sea-faring adventurer, modern historians, following the faith of the ancient Greeks, have generally acquiesced, till, latterly, the Germans, with that instinctive hostility to external tradition which characterises them, have boldly ventured to explain both the Egyptian and his colony away into a symbol, or an inanity. Of our most recent writers, however, THIRLWALL, after considering all the German speculations on the subject, is not ashamed to say a word in favour of the possibility or probability of an Egyptian colony in Argos ;* while CLINTON † (Introd. pp. 6, 7), boldly announces the principle that "we may acknowledge as real persons all those whom there is no reason for rejecting. The presumption is in favour of the early tradition. . . . Cadmus and Danaus appear to be real persons ; for it is conformable to the state of mankind, and perfectly credible that Phœnician and Egyptian adventurers, in the ages to which these persons are ascribed, should have found their way to the coasts of Greece." GROTE, however, seems to have acted most wisely in refusing to decide whether any particular legend of the earliest times is mythical or historical, on the ground that, though many of the legends doubtless contain truth, they contain it only "in a sort of chemical combination with fiction, which we have no means of decomposing"—(II. p. 50). This play of Æschylus, therefore, cannot boast of any accessory historical superadded to the principal poetic interest.

Danaus, the legend tells, though an Egyptian born, was not of Egyptian descent. The original mother of his race was Io, daughter of Inachus, king of Argos, and priestess of Hera in that place. How this much-persecuted maid found her way from the banks of the "Erasinus old" to the shores of the nurturing Nile, we have seen in the previous piece. Danaus had a brother called Ægyptus, the father of fifty sons, as himself was of fifty daughters. These fifty sons Ægyptus sought to unite in wedlock to the equal-numbered progeny of his brother ; but the chaste maidens, whether because they actually thought it unholy (as it certainly is, in the general case, unadvisable) for first cousins to marry first cousins, or

* Vol. I., c. 3. † FAST., HELLEN., Introduc. pp. 6, 7.

because the suit was pressed in a manner not the most respectful, or from a combination of both motives, refused to enter into the bond; and, to escape the importunities of their stronger male suitors, fled, under the guidance of their father, over the seas to Greece. As kind chance, or, rather, Divine Providence, would have it, they were wafted to that very part of Greece whence their famous ancestress Io had originally proceeded, when the god-sent gadfly drove her, in a career of tempestuous wanderings, through great part of Europe and Asia, to Egypt. With their landing on this coast the present opera commences; and the action which it represents is the very simple one of the reception of the Libyan fugitives, by the Argive monarch Pelasgus (otherwise called Gelanor), and their participation in the rights and privileges of Argive citizenship. The transference of their affections from Nile to Erasinus is solemnly sung in the concluding chaunt. The Danaides are now Argives.

Considered by itself, the action of this piece is the most meagre that can be conceived, and, as the poet has handled it, contains little that can stir the deeper feelings of the heart, or strike the imagination strongly. That the king of the Argives should feel serious doubts as to the propriety of receiving such a band of foreigners into his kingdom, formidable not in their own strength, indeed, but in respect of the pursuing party, by whom they were claimed, was most natural; equally natural, however, and, in a poetic point of view, necessary, that his political fears should finally be outweighed by his benevolent regard for the rights of unprotected virgins, and his pious fear of the wrath of Jove, the protector of suppliants. The alternation of mind between these contending feelings, till a final resolve is taken on the side of the right, affords no field for the higher faculty of the dramatist to display itself. As we have it, accordingly, the Suppliants is, perhaps, the weakest performance of Æschylus. But the fact is, there is the best reason to believe that the great father of tragedy never meant this piece to stand alone, but wrote it merely to usher in the main action, which followed in the other pieces of a trilogy; the names of which pieces—Αἰγύπτιοι, and Δαναΐδες—are preserved in the list of the author's pieces still extant. Of this, the whole conclusion of the present piece, and especially the latter half of the last choral chaunt, furnishes the most conclusive evidence.

The remainder of the story, which formed the main action of the trilogy, is well known. Immediately after the reception of the fugitives, by the Argives, their pursuers arrive, and land on the coast. This arrival is announced in the last scene of the present piece. On

is, Danaus, unwilling to lead his kind host into a war, pretends to eld to the suit still as eagerly pressed, and the marriage is agreed n. But a terrible revenge had been devised. At the very moment at he hands over his unwilling but obedient daughters to the bjection of their hated cousins, he gives them secret instructions furnish themselves each with a dagger, and, during the watches the nuptial night, to dip the steel in the throats of their unsuspect-g lords. The bloody deed was completed. Only one of all the fty daughters, preferring the fame of true womanhood to the claims filial homage, spared her mate. Hypermnestra saved her hus-and Lynceus. This conduct, of course, brought the daughter into llision with her father and her father's family; and one of those rifes of our mysterious moral nature was educed, which, as we ave seen in the trilogy of the Orestiad, it was one great purpose the Æschylean drama to reconcile. If the murder occupied the econd piece, as the progress of the story naturally brings with it, third piece, according to the analogy of the Eumenides, would e necessary to bring about the reconciliation, and effect that urifying of the passions which Aristotle points out as the great oral result of tragic composition. That Aphrodite was the reat celestial agent employed in the finale of the Suppliants, as allas Athena is in the Furies, has been well divined; a beautiful agment in celebration of love, and in favour of Hypermnestra emains; but to attempt a reconstruction of these lost pieces at the resent day, though an amusement of which the learned Germans re fond, is foreign to the habits of the British mind. Those who el inclined to see what ingenuity may achieve in this region, are eferred to Welcker's Trilogie, and Gruppe's Ariadne.

The moral tone and character of this piece is in the highest egree pleasing and satisfactory. The Supreme Jove, whose pro-inent attribute is power, here receives a glorification as the rotector of the persecuted, and the refuge of the distressed. On ie duty of hospitality, under the sanction of Ζεύς ξένιος and Ικεσιος, s practised among the ancient Greeks, I refer the reader with easure to Grote's History of Greece, Vol. II., p. 114.

"The scene," says Potter, "is near the shore, in an open grove, ose to the altar and images of the gods presiding over the sacred mes, with a view of the sea and ships of Egyptus on one side, and the town of Argos on the other, with hills, and woods, and vales, river flowing between them: all, together with the persons of the rama, forming a picture that would have well employed the united encils of Poussin and Claude."

THE SUPPLIANTS

CHORUS, *entering the stage in procession. March time.*

Jove, the suppliant's high protector,[1]
Look from Heaven, benignly favouring
Us the suppliant band, swift-oared
Hither sailing, from the seven mouths
Of the fat fine-sanded Nile![2]
From the land that fringes Syria,
Land divine, in flight we came,
Not by public vote forth-driven,
Not by taint of blood divorced
From our native state,* but chastely
Our abhorrent foot withdrawing
From impure ungodly wedlock
With Ægyptus' sons, too nearly
Cousined with ourselves. For wisely,
This our threatened harm well-weighing,
Danaus, our sire, prime counsellor,
And leader of our sistered band,
Timely chose this least of sorrows
O'er the salt-sea wave to flee;
And here on Argive soil to plant us,
Whence our race its vaunted spring
Drew divinely, when great Jove
Gently thrilled the brize-stung heifer[3]
With his procreant touch, and breathed
Godlike virtue on her womb.
Where on Earth should we hope refuge
On more friendly ground than this,
In our hands these green boughs bearing
Wreathed with precatory wool?†
Ye blissful gods supremely swaying[4]
Land and city, and lucid streams;
And ye in sepulchres dark, severely

* See Introductory Remarks to the Eumenides.

† The usual insignia of Suppliants. Wool was commonly used in the adornment of signia hallowed by religion.—See Dict. Antiq., *voc. infula* and *apex.*; and Note 72 to e Choephoræ, and Clem. Alex. Prot. § 10.

Worshipped 'neath the sunless ground;
And thou, the third, great Jove the Saviour,
Guardian of all holy homes,
With your spirit gracious-wafted,
Breathe fair welcome on this band
Of suppliant maids. But in the depth
Of whirling waves engulph the swarm
Of insolent youths, Ægyptus' sons,
Them, and their sea-cars swiftly oared,
Ere this slimy shore receive
Their hated footprint. Let them labour,
With wrath-spitting seas confronted:
By the wild storm wintry-beating,
Thunder-crashing, lightning flashing,
By the tyrannous blast shower-laden
Let them perish, ere they mount
Marriage beds which right refuses,[5]
Us, their father's brother's daughters
To their lawless yoke enthralling!

The CHORUS *assemble in a band round the centre of the Orchestra, and sing the Choral Hymn.*

STROPHE I.

Give ear to our prayer, we implore thee,
Thou son, and the mother that bore thee—
The calf and the heifer divine! *
From afar be thine offspring's avenger,
Even thou, once a beautiful ranger
O'er these meads with the grass-cropping kine!
And thou, whom she bore to her honor,
When the breath of the Highest was on her,
And the touch of the finger divine;
Thine ear, mighty god, we implore thee
To the prayer of thine offspring incline!

ANTISTROPHE I.

O Thou who with blessing anointed,
Wert born when by Fate 'twas appointed,
With thy name to all ages a sign! †
In this land of the mother that bore thee,
Her toils we remember before thee,
Where she cropped the green mead with the kine

* Epaphus and Io.
† Epaphus, from ἐπαφή. See Note 3 immediately above.

O strange were her fortunes, and stranger
The fate that hath chased me from danger
To the home of the heifer divine.
O son, with the mother that bore thee,
Stamp my tale with thy truth for a sign!

STROPHE AND ANTISTROPHE II.

While we cry, should there haply be near us
An Argive, an augur,* to hear us,
When our shrill-piercing wail
His ear shall assail,
'Tis the cry he will deem, and none other,
Of Procne, the woe-wedded mother,
The hawk-hunted nightingale;†
Sad bird, when its known streams it leaveth,
And with fresh-bleeding grief lonely grieveth,
And telleth the tale,
With a shrill-voiced wail,
How the son that she loved, and none other,
Was slain by his fell-purposed mother,
The woe-wedded nightingale!

STROPHE III.

Even so from the Nile summer-tinted,
With Ionian wailings unstinted,[6]
My cheek with the keen nail I tear;
And I pluck, where it bloweth,
Grief's blossom that groweth
In this heart first acquainted with care;
And I fear the fierce band,
From the far misty land,[7]
Whom the swift ships to Argos may bear.

ANTISTROPHE III.

Ye gods of my race, seeing clearly
The right which ye cherish so dearly,
To the haughty your hatred declare!
'Gainst the right ye will never
Chaste virgins deliver,
The bed of the lawless to share;
From the god-fenced altar
Each awe-struck assaulter
Back shrinks. Our sure bulwark is there.

* This is explained by what follows. An augur, of course, was the proper person t recognise the notes of birds, or what resembled them.
† See Note 76 to Agamemnon.

STROPHE IV.

O would that Jove might show to men
His counsel as he planned it;
But ah! he darky weaves the scheme,
No mortal eye hath scanned it.
It burns through darkness brightly clear
To whom the god shall show it;
But mortal man, through cloudy fear,
Shall search in vain to know it.

ANTISTROPHE IV.

Firm to the goal his purpose treads,
His will knows no frustration;
When with his brow the mighty god
Hath nodded consummation.
But strangely, strangely weave their maze
His counsels, dusky wending,
Concealed in densely-tangled ways
From human comprehending.

STROPHE V.

From their high-towering hopes the proud
In wretched rout he casteth.
No force he wields; his simple will,
His quiet sentence blasteth.
All godlike power is calm;[8] and high
On thrones of glory seated,
Jove looks from Heaven with tranquil eye,
And sees his will completed.

ANTISTROPHE V.

Look down, O mighty god, and see
How this harsh wedlock planning,
That dry old tree in saplings green,
The insolent lust is fanning!
Madly he hugs the frenzied plan
With perverse heart unbending,
Hot-spurred, till Ruin seize the man,
Too late to think of mending.

STROPHE VI.

Ah! well-a-day! ah! well-a-day![9]
Thus sadly I hymn the sorrowful lay,

With a shrill-voiced cry,
With a sorrow-streaming eye,
Well-a-day, woe's me!
Thus I grace my own tomb with the wail pouring-free,
Thus I sing my own dirge, ah me! *
Ye Apian hills, be kind to me,
And throw not back the stranger's note,
But know the Libyan wail.
Behold how, rent to sorrow's note,
My linen robes all loosely float,
And my Sidonian veil.

ANTISTROPHE VI.

Ah! well-a-day! ah! well-a-day!
My plighted vows I'll duly pay,
Ye gods, if ye will save
From the foe, and from the grave
My trembling life set free!
Surges high, surges high, sorrow's many-billowed sea,
And woe towers on woe. Ah me!
Ye Apian hills,[10] be kind to me,
And throw not back the stranger's note
But know the Libyan wail!
Behold how, rent to sorrow's note,
My linen robes all loosely float,
And my Sidonian veil!

STROPHE VII.

And yet, in that slight timbered house, well-armed
With frequent-plashing oar,
Stiff sail and cordage straining, all unharmed
By winter's stormy roar,
We reached this Argive shore.
Safely so far. May Jove, the all-seeing, send
As the beginning, so the prosperous end.
And may he grant, indeed,
That we, a gracious mother's gracious seed,
By no harsh kindred wooed,
May live on Apian ground unyoked and unsubdued!

* Pal. quotes from Massinger's *Emperor of the East*, "To a sad tune I sing my own ge," which I have adopted.

ANTISTROPHE VII.

May she, the virgin daughter of high Jove,*
Our virgin litany hear,
Our loving homage answering with more love!
She that, with face severe,
Repelled, in awful fear,
Each rude aggressor, in firm virtue cased,
Nor knew the lustful touch divinely chaste.
And may she grant, indeed,
That we, a gracious mother's gracious seed,
By no harsh kindred wooed,
May live on Apian ground unyoked and unsubdued.

STROPHE VIII.

But if no aid to us may be,
Libya's swart sun-beaten daughters,
The rope shall end our toils; and we,
Beneath the ground, shall fare to thee,
Thou many-guested Jove,†
To thee our suppliant boughs we'll spread,
Thou Saviour of the weary Dead,
Far from the shining thrones of blissful gods above.
Ah, Jove too well we know
What wrath divine scourged ancient Io, wailing
Beneath thy consort's anger heaven-scaling;
And even so,
On Io's seed may blow
A buffeting blast from her of black despairful woe.

ANTISTROPHE VIII.

O Jove, how then wilt thou be free
From just reproach of Libya's daughters,
If thou in us dishonoured see
Him whom the heifer bore to thee
Whom thou didst chiefly love.
If thou from us shalt turn thy face,
What suppliant then shall seek thy grace?
O hear my prayer enthroned in loftiest state above!
For well, too well, we know
What wrath divine scourged ancient Io, wailing
Beneath thy consort's anger heaven-scaling;

* Artemis, or Diana.
† *τον πολυξενώτατον Ζῆνα*, that is, Pluto.

And even so,
On Io's seed may blow
A buffeting blast from her of black despairful woe.

Enter DANAUS.

Danaus. Be wise, my daughters. In no rash flight with me,
A hoary father, and a faithful pilot,
Ye crossed the seas; nor less is wisdom needful
Ashore; be wise, and on your heart's true tablet
Engrave my words. For lo! where mounts the dust,
A voiceless herald of their coming; hear
Their distant-rumbling wheels! A host I see
Of bright shield-bearing and spear-shaking men,
Swift steeds, and rounded cars.[11] Of our here landing,
Timely apprised, the chiefs that rule this country
Come with their eyes to read us. But be their coming
Harmless, or harsh with fell displeasure, here
On this high-seat of the Agonian gods[12]
Is safety for my daughters; for an altar
Is a sure tower of strength, a shield that bears
The rattling terror dintless. Go ye, therefore,
Embrace these altars, in your sistered hands[13]
These white-wreathed precatory boughs presenting,
Which awful Jove reveres; and with choice phrase
Wisely your pity-moving tale-commend
When they shall ask you; as becomes the stranger,
The bloodless motive of your flight declaring
With clear recital. The bold tongue eschewing,
With sober-fronted face and quiet eye
Your tale unfold. The garrulous prate, the length
Of slow-drawn speech beware. Such fault offends
This people sorely. Chiefly know to yield:
Thou art the weaker—a poor helpless stranger—
The bold-mouthed phrase suits ill with thy condition.

Chorus. Father, thou speakest wisely: nor unwisely
Thy words would we receive, in memory's ward
Storing thy hests; ancestral Jove be witness!

Danaus. Even so; and with benignant eye look down![14]

Chorus. * * * *

Danaus. Delay not. In performance show thy strength.

Chorus. Even there where thou dost sit, I'd sit beside thee!

Danaus. O Jove show pity ere pity come too late!

Chorus. Jove willing, all is well.

Danaus. Him, therefore, pray,
There where his bird the altar decorates:[15] pray
Apollo, too, the pure, the exiled once[16]
From bright Olympus.
Chorus. The sun's restoring rays
We pray: the god what fate he knew will pity.
Danaus. May he with pity and with aid be near!
Chorus. Whom next shall I invoke?
Danaus. Thou see'st this trident
And know'st of whom the symbol?
Chorus. May the same
That sent us hither kindly now receive us!
Danaus. Here's Hermes likewise, as Greece knows the god.[17]
Chorus. Be he my herald, heralding the free!
Danaus. This common altar of these mighty gods
Adore: within these holy precincts lodged,
Pure doves from hawks of kindred plumage fleeing,
Foes of your blood, polluters of your race.
Can bird eat bird and be an holy thing?[18]
Can man be pure, from an unwilling father
Robbing unwilling brides? Who does these deeds
Will find no refuge from lewd guilt in Hades;
For there, as we have heard, another Jove
Holds final judgment on the guilty shades.
But now be ready. Here await their coming;
May the gods grant a victory to our prayers!

Enter KING.

King. Whom speak we here? Whence come? Certes no Greeks
Your tire rich-flaunting with barbaric pride
Bespeaks you strangers. Argos knows you not,
Nor any part of Greece. Strange surely 'tis
That all unheralded, unattended all,
And of no host the acknowledged guest, unfearing
Ye tread this land.[19] If these boughs, woolly-wreathed,
That grace the altars of the Agonian gods
Speak what to Greeks they should speak, ye are suppliants.
Thus much I see: what more remains to guess
I spare; yourselves have tongues to speak the truth.
Chorus. That we are strangers is most true; but whom
See we in thee? a citizen? a priest?
A temple warder with his sacred wand?
The ruler of the state?

King. Speak with a fearless tongue, and plainly. I
Of old earth-born Palæcthon am the son,[20]
My name Pelasgus, ruler of this land;
And fathered with my name the men who reap
Earth's fruits beneath my sway are called Pelasgi;
And all the land where Algos flows, and Strymon,[21]
Toward the westering sun my sceptre holds.
My kingdom the Perrhæbians bound, and those
Beyond high Pindus, by Pæonia, and
The Dodonéan heights; the briny wave
Completes the circling line; within these bounds
I rule; but here, where now thy foot is planted,
The land is Apia, from a wise physician
Of hoary date so called. He, from Naupactus,
Apollo's son, by double right, physician
And prophet both,[22] crossed to this coast, and freed it
By holy purifyings, from the plague
Of man-destroying monsters, which the ground
With ancient taint of blood polluted bore.
This plague his virtue medicinal healed,
That we no more unfriendly fellowship
Hold with the dragon-brood. Such worthy service
With thankful heart the Argive land received,
And Apis lives remembered in her prayers.
Of this from me assured, now let me hear
Your whence, and what your purpose. Briefly speak;
This people hates much phrase.

Chorus. Our tale is short.
We by descent are Argives, from the seed
Of the heifer sprung, whose womb was blest in bearing;
And this in every word we can confirm
By manifest proofs.

King. That ye are Argives, this
My ear receives not; an unlikely tale!
Like Libyan women rather; not a line
I trace in you that marks our native race.
Nile might produce such daughters; ye do bear
A Cyprian character in your female features,
The impressed likeness of some plastic male.*
Of wandering Indians I have heard, that harness
Camels for mules, huge-striding, dwelling near
The swarthy Æthiop land; ye may be such;
Or, had ye war's accoutrement, the bow,

* See Note 46 to the Eumenides.

Ye might be Amazons, stern, husband-hating,
Flesh-eating maids. But speak, that I may know
The truth. How vouch ye your descent from Argos?

Chorus. They say that Io, on this Argive ground,
Erst bore the keys to Hera,[23] then 'tis said,
So runs the general rumour—[24]

King. I have heard.
Was it not so, Jove with the mortal maid
Mingled in love?

Chorus. Even so; in love they mingled,
Deceiving Hera's bed.

King. And how then ended
The Olympian strife?

Chorus. Enraged, the Argive goddess
To a heifer changed the maid.

King. And the god came
To the fair horned heifer?

Chorus. Like a leaping bull,
Transformed he came;[25] so the hoar legend tells.

King. And what did then the potent spouse of Jove?

Chorus. She sent a watchman ringed with eyes to watch.

King. This all-beholding herdsman, who was he?

Chorus. Argus the son of Earth, by Hermes slain.

King. How further fared the ill-fated heifer, say?

Chorus. A persecuting brize was sent to sting her.

King. And o'er the wide earth goaded her the brize?

Chorus. Just so; thy tale with mine accordant chimes.

King. Then to Canopus, and to Memphis came she?

Chorus. There, touched by Jove's boon hand, she bore a son.

King. The heifer's boasted offspring, who was he?

Chorus. Epaphus, who plainly with his name declares
His mother's safety wrought by touch of Jove.

King. * * * *[26]

Chorus. Libya, dowered with a fair land's goodly name.

King. And from this root divine what other shoots?

Chorus. Belus, my father's father, and my uncle's.

King. Who is thy honoured father?

Chorus. Danaus;
And fifty sons his brother hath, my uncle.

King. This brother who? Spare not to tell the whole.

Chorus. Ægyptus. Now, O king, our ancient race
Thou knowest. Us from our prostration raising,
Thou raisest Argos.

King. Argives in sooth ye seem,
By old descent participant of the soil;
But by what stroke of sore mischance harsh-smitten,
Dared ye to wander from your native seats?

Chorus. Pelasgian prince, a motley-threaded web
Is human woe; a wing of dappled plumes.
Past hope and faith it was that we, whose blood
From Argive Io flows, to Io's city,
In startled flight, should measure back our way,
To escape from hated marriage.

King. How say'st thou?
To escape from marriage thou art here, displaying
These fresh-cropt branches, snowy-wreathed, before
The Agonian gods?

Chorus. Ay! Never, never may we
Be thralled to Ægyptus' sons!

King. Speak'st thou of hate
To them, or of a bond your laws forbid?

Chorus. Both this and that.[27] Who should be friends were foes,
And blood with blood near-mingled basely flows.

King. But branch on branch well grafted goodlier grows.

Chorus. Urge not this point; but rather think one word
From thee the wretched rescues.

King. How then shall I
My friendly disposition show?

Chorus. We ask
But this—from our pursuers save us.

King. What!
Shall I for unknown exiles breed a war?

Chorus. Justice will fight for him who fights for us.

King. Doubtless; if Justice from the first hath stamped
Your cause for hers.

Chorus [*pointing to the altar*]. The state's high poop here crowned
Revere.

King. This green environment of shade,
Mantling the seats of the gods I see, and shudder.

Chorus. The wrath of suppliant Jove[28] is hard to bear.

STROPHE I.

O hear my cry, benignly hear!
Thou son of Palæcthon, hear me!
The fugitive wandering suppliant hear!
Thou king of Pelasgians, hear me!

Like a heifer young by the wolf pursued[29]
O'er the rocks so cliffy and lonely,
And loudly it lows to the herdsman good,
Whose strength can save it only.

King. My eyes are tasked; there, 'neath the shielding shade
Of fresh-lopt branches I behold you clinging
To these Agonian gods; but what I do
Must spare the state from harm. I must provide
That no unlooked-for unprepared event
Beget new strife; of this we have enough.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Chorus. Great Jove that allotteth their lot to all,
By his sentence of right shall clear thee,
Dread Themis that heareth the suppliants' call,
No harm shall allow to come near thee.
Though I speak to the old with the voice of the you
Do the will of the gods, and surely
Their favour to thee justly weighed shall belong,
When thy gifts thou offerest purely.

King. Not at my hearth with precatory boughs
Ye lie. The state, if guilty taint from you
Affect the general weal, will for the state
Take counsel. I nor pledge nor promise give,
Till all the citizens hear what thou shalt say.

STROPHE II.

Chorus. Thou art the state, and the people art thou,[30]
The deed that thou doest who judges?
The hearth and the altar before thee bow,
The grace that thou grantest who grudges?
Thou noddest; the will that thou willest is thine,
Thy vote with no voter thou sharest;
The throne is all thine, and the sceptre divine,
And thy guilt, when thou sinnest, thou bearest.

King. Guilt lie on those that hate me! but your prayers
Harmless I may not hear; and to reject them
Were harsh. To do, and not to do alike
Perplex me; on the edge of choice I tremble.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Chorus. Him worship who sitteth a watchman in Heave
And looks on this life of our labour;

Nor looketh in vain, when the wretched is driven
From the gate of his pitiless neighbour.
On our knees when we fall, and for mercy we call,
If his right thou deny to the stranger,
Jove shall look on thy home, from his thunder dome,
Sternly wrathful, the suppliants' avenger.

King. But if Ægyptus' sons shall claim you, pleading
Their country's laws, and their near kinship, who
Shall dare to stand respondent? You must plead
Your native laws, so the laws plead for you,
And speak you free from who would force your love.

STROPHE III.

Chorus. Ah ne'er to the rough-handed youth let me yield,
But rather alone, 'neath the wide starry field,
Let me wander, an outcast, a stranger!
The ill-sorted yoke I abhor: and do thou,
With Justice to second thee, judge for me now,
And fear Him above, the Avenger!

King. Not I shall judge: it is no easy judgment.
What I have said, I said. Without the people
I cannot do this thing;[31] being absolute king,
I would not. Justly, if mischance shall follow,
The popular tongue will blame the ruler, who,
To save the stranger, ruined his own flock.

ANTISTROPHE III.

Chorus. Where kindred with kindred contendeth in war,
Jove looks on the strife, and decides from afar,
Where he holdeth the scales even-handed;*
O why wilt thou doubt to declare for the right?
He blesseth the good, but in anger will smite,
Where the sons of the wicked are banded.

King. To advise for you in such confounding depths,
My soul should be a diver, to plunge down
Far in the pool profound with seeing eye,
And feel no dizziness. 'Tis no light matter
Here to unite your safety and the state's.
If that your kindred claim you as their right,
And we withstand, a bloody strife ensues.
If from these altars of the gods we tear you,
Your chosen refuge, we shall surely bring

* See Iliad viii. 69, and other passages, describing the "golden scales of Jove," in which the fates of men are weighed.

The all-destroying god, the stern Alastor,*
To house with us, whom not the dead in Hades
Can flee. Is here no cause to ponder well?

STROPHE I.

Chorus. Ponder well;
With thee to dwell,
A righteous-minded host receive us!
Weary-worn,
Exiles lorn,
From the godless men that grieve us
Save to-day;
Nor cast-a-way
Homeless, houseless, hopeless leave us!

ANTISTROPHE I.

Shall rash assaulters
From these altars
Rudely drag the friendless stranger?
Thou art king,
'Neath thy wing
Cowers in vain the weak from danger?
Thy terror show
To our fierce foe,
Fear, O fear our High Avenger!

STROPHE II.

Where they see
The gods and thee,
Shall their lawless will not falter?
Shall they tear
My floating hair,
As a horse dragged by the halter?
Wilt thou bear
Him to tear
My frontlets fair,
My linen robes—the bold assaulter?

ANTISTROPHE II.

One the danger,
If the stranger
Thou reject, or welcome wisely:
For thee and thine
To Mars a fine

* See the Agamemnon, Note 94.

Thou shalt pay the same precisely :
From Egypt far
Fearing war,
Thou shalt mar
Thy peace with mighty Jove, not wisely.

King. Both ways I'm marred. Even here my wits are stranded.
With these or those harsh war to make, strong Force
Compels my will. Nailed am I like a vessel
Screwed to the dock, beneath the shipwright's tool.
Which way I turn is woe. A plundered house
By grace of possessory Jove[32] may freight
New ships with bales that far outweigh the loss ;
And a rash tongue that overshoots the mark
With barbéd phrase that harshly frets the heart,
With one smooth word, may charm the offence away.
But ere the sluice of kindred blood be opened,
With vows and victims we must pray the gods
Importunate, if perchance such fateful harm
They may avert. Myself were little wise
To mingle in this strife : of such a war
Most ignorant is most blest : but may the gods
Deceive my fears, and crown your hopes with blessing !

Chorus. Now hear the end of my respectful prayers.

King. I hear. Speak on. Thy words shall not escape me.

Chorus. Thou see'st this sash, this zone my stole begirding.

King. Fit garniture of women. Yes ; I see it.

Chorus. This zone well-used may serve us well.

King. How so ?

Chorus. If thou refuse to pledge our safety, then—

King. Thy zone shall pledge it how ?

Chorus. Thou shalt behold
These ancient altars with new tablets hung.

King. Thou speak'st in riddles. Explain.

Chorus. These gods shall see me
Here hanging from their shrines.

King. Hush, maiden ! Hush !
Thy words pierce through my marrow !

Chorus. Thou hast heard
No blind enigma now. I gave it eyes.

King. Alas ! with vast environment of ills
I'm hedged all round. Misfortune, like a sea,
Comes rushing in : the deep unfathomed flood
I fear to cross, and find no harbour nigh.

Thy prayer if I refuse, black horror rises
Before me, that no highest-pointed aim
May overshoot. If posted fore these walls
I give thy kindred battle, I shall be
Amerced with bitter loss, who reckless dared
For woman's sake to incarnadine the plain
With brave men's blood. Yet I perforce must fear
The wrath of suppliant Jove, than which no terror
Awes human hearts more strongly. Take these branches,
Thou aged father of these maids, and place them
On other altars of the native gods,
Where they may speak, true heralds of thy mission,
To all the citizens: and, mark me, keep
My words within thy breast: for still the people
To spy a fault in whoso bears authority
Have a most subtle sight. Trust your good cause.
Thy pitiful tale may move their righteous ire
Against your haughty-hearted persecutors,
And 'neath their wings they'll shield you. The afflicted
Plead for themselves: their natural due is kindness.

Danaus. Your worth we know to prize, and at their weight
Our high protector's friendly words we value.
But send, we pray, attendant guides to show us
The pillar-compassed seats divine,[33] the altars
That stand before their temples, who protect
This city and this land, and to insure
Our safety mid the people: for our coming
(Being strangers from the distant Nile, and not
Like you that drink the stream of Inachus
In features or in bearing) might seem strange.
Too bold an air might rouse suspicion; men
Oft-times have slain their best friends unawares.

King [*to the Attendants*]. See him escorted well! conduct him hence
To the altars of the city, to the shrines
Of the protecting gods, wasting no speech
On whom you meet. Attend the suppliant stranger!

[*Exeunt Attendants with* DANAUS.

Chorus. These words to him: and, with his sails well trimmed
Fair be his voyage! But I, what shall I do,
My anchor where?

King. Here leave these boughs that prove
Thy sorrows.

Chorus. Here at thy rever'd command
I leave them.
King. This ample wood shall shade thee; wait thou here!
Chorus. No sacred grove is this: how should it shield me?
King. We will not yield thee to the vultures' claws.
Chorus. But worse than vultures, worse than dragons threat us.
King. Gently. To fair words give a fair reply.
Chorus. I'm terror-struck. Small marvel that I fret.
King. Fear should be far, when I the king am near.*
Chorus. With kind words cheer me, and kind actions too.
King. Thy father will return anon; meanwhile
I go to call the assembly of the people,[34]
And in thy favour move them, if I can.
Thy father, too, I'll aptly train, how he
Should woo their favour. Wait ye here, and pray
The native gods to crown your heart's desire.
I go to speed the business; may Persuasion
And Chance, with happy issue pregnant, guide me!

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

King of all kings, high-blest above
Each blest celestial nature,
Strength of the strong, all-glorious Jove,
All crowning Consummator![35]
Hear thou our prayer: the proud confound;
With hate pursue the hateful,
And plunge in purpling pools profound
The black-bench'd bark, the fateful!

ANTISTROPHE I.

Our ancient line from thee we trace
Our root divinely planted;
Look on these sisters with the grace
To that loved maid once granted,
Our mother Io; and renew
Sweet memory in the daughters
Of her thy gentle touch who knew
By Nile's deep-rolling waters.

STROPHE II.

Here, even here, where 'mid the browsing kine,
My Argive mother fed her eye divine,
With rich mead's flowery store,

* See PALEY.

My Libyan foot I've planted; hence by the brize[36]
Divinely fretted with fitful oar she hies[37]
From various shore to shore,
God-maddened wanderer. Twice the billowy wave
She crossed; and twice her fated name she gave
To the wide sea's straitened roar.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Spurred through the Asian land with swiftest speed
She fled, where Phrygian flocks far-pasturing feed,
Then restless travelled o'er
Mysia, where Teuthras holds his fortress high,
Cilician and Pamphylian heights, and nigh
Where roaring waters pour
From fountains ever fresh their torrent floods,
And Aphrodite's land whose loamy roods
Swell with the wheaten store.*

STROPHE III.

Thence by her wingéd keeper stung, she speeds
To the land divine, the many-nurturing meads,
And to the snow-fed stream,
Which like impetuous Typhon,† vasty pours
Its purest waves, that the salubrious shores
From pestilent taint redeem.‡
Here from harsh Hera's madly-goading pest,
From hattering chase of undeserved unrest,
At length by the holy stream.

ANTISTROPHE III.

She rests. Pale terror smote their hearts who saw
The unwonted sight beheld with startled awe
The thronging sons of Nile;
Nor dared to approach this thing of human face,[38]
Portentous-mingled with the lowing race,
Treading the Libyan soil.
Who then was he, the brize-stung Io's friend,
With charms of soothing virtue strong to end
Her weary-wandering toil?

STROPHE IV.

Jove, mighty Jove, Heaven's everlasting king,
He soft-inspiring came,

* Cyprus. † See Prometheus Bound, p. 192 above.
‡ See Prometheus Bound, p. 204 and Note 46.

And with fond force innocuous heals her ills;
She from her eyes in lucent drops distils
The stream of sorrowful shame,
And in her womb from Jove a burden bore,
A son of blameless fame,
Who with his prosperous life long blessed the Libyan shore

ANTISTROPHE IV.

Far-pealed the land with jubilant shout—from Jove,
From Jove it surely came,
This living root of a far-branching line!
For who but Jove prevailed, with power divine,
Harsh Hera's wrath to tame?
Such the great work of Jove; and we are such,
O Jove, our race who claim
From him whose name declares the virtue of thy touch.

STROPHE V.

For whom more justly shall my hymn be chaunted
Than thee, above all gods that be, high-vaunted,
Root of my race, great Jove;
Prime moulder from whose plastic-touching hand
Life leaps: thine ancient-minded counsels stand,
Thou all-devising Jove.

ANTISTROPHE V.

High-throned above the highest as the lowest,
Beyond thee none, and mightier none thou knowest,
The unfearing, all-feared one.
When his deep thought takes counsel to fulfil,
No dull delays clog Jove's decided will;[89]
He speaks, and it is done.

Enter DANAUS.

Danaus. Be of good cheer, my daughters! All is well,
The popular voice hath perfected our prayers.
Chorus. Hail father, bearer of good news: but say,
How was the matter stablished? and how far
Prevailed the people's uplifted hands to save us?
Danaus. Not doubtingly, but with a bold decision,
That made my old heart young again to see't.
With one acclaim, a forest of right hands
Rose through the hurtled air. These Libyan exiles—
So ran the popular will—shall find a home

In Argos, free, and from each robber hand
Inviolate, the native or the stranger;
And, whoso holding Argive land refuses
To shield these virgins from the threatened force,
Disgrace shall brand him, and the popular vote
Oust him from Argos. Such response the king
Persuasive forced, with wise admonishment;
Urging the wrath of Jove, which else provoked
Would fatten on our woes, and the twin wrong
To you the stranger, and to them the city,
Pollution at their gate, a fuel to feed
Ills without end. These words the Argive people
Answered with suffragating hands, nor waited
The herald's call to register their votes:
Just eloquence ruled their willing ear, and Jove
Crowned their fair purpose with the perfect deed. [*Ex*

Chorus. Come then, sisters, pour we freely
Grateful prayers for Argive kindness;
Jove, the stranger's friend, befriend us,
While from stranger's mouth sincerest
Here we voice the hymn;
To a blameless issue, surely,
Jove will guide the fate.

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

Jove-born gods, benignly bending,
Look, we pray, with eyes befriending,
On these Argive halls!
Ne'er may Mars, the wanton daring,
With his shrill trump, joyless-blaring,
Wrap, in wild flames, fiercely flaring,
These Pelasgian walls!
Go! thy gory harvest reaping
Far from us: thy bloody weeping
Distant tribes may know.
Bless, O Jove, this Argive nation!
They have heard the supplication
Of thy suppliants low;
Where the swooping Fate abased us,
They with Mercy's vote upraised us
From the prostrate woe!

ANTISTROPHE I.

Not with the male, the stronger, erring,
But, woman's weaker cause preferring,
Stood their virtue proof:
Wisely Jove, the Avenger, fearing,
To the chastened eye appearing,
High his front of wrath up-rearing
'Gainst the guilty roof.
For heavily, heavily weighs the Alastor,
Scapeless, and, with sore disaster,
Sinks the sinner low.
Bless, O Jove, this Argive nation,
That knew their kindred's supplication,
And saved them from the foe:
And when their vows they pay, then surely
Gifts from clean hands offered purely
Thou in grace shalt know.

STROPHE II.

High these suppliant branches raising,
Sisters, ancient Argos praising,
Pour the grateful strain!
Far from thy Pelasgian portals
Dwell black Plague, from drooping mortals
Ebbing life to drain!
May'st thou see the crimson river
From fierce home-bred slaughter, never
Flowing o'er thy plain!
Far from thee the youth-consuming
Blossom-plucking strife!
The harsh spouse of Aphrodite,
Furious Mars in murder mighty,
Where he sees thy beauty blooming,
Spare his blood-smeared knife!

ANTISTROPHE II.

May a reverend priesthood hoary
Belt thy shrines, their chiefest glory,
With an holy band!
By the bountiful libation,
By the blazing pile, this nation
Shall securely stand.
Jove, the great All-ruler, fearing,

Jove, the stranger's stay, revering,
Ye shall save the land;
Jove, sure-throned above all cavil,
Rules by ancient right,
May just rulers never fail thee!
Holy Hecate's aid avail thee,[40]
To thy mothers when in travail
Sending labours light!

STROPHE III.

May no wasting march of ruin
Work, O Argos, thine undoing!
Never may'st thou hear
Cries of Mars, the shrill, the lyreless!
Ne'er may tearful moans, and quireless,
Wake the sleeper's ear!
Far from thee the shapes black-trooping
Of disease, delightless-drooping!
May the blazing death-winged arrow
Of the Sun-god spare the marrow
Of thy children dear!

ANTISTROPHE III.

Mighty Jove, the gracious giver,
With his full-sheaved bounty ever
Crown the fruited year!
Flocks that graze before thy dwelling
With rich increase yearly swelling
The prosperous ploughman cheer!
May the gods no grace deny thee,
And the tuneful Muses nigh thee,
With exuberant raptures brimming,
From virgin throats thy praises hymning
Hold the charmèd ear!

STROPHE IV.

O'er the general weal presiding,
They that rule with far-providing
Wisdom sway, and stably-guiding,
Changeful counsels mar!
Timely with each foreign nation
Leagues of wise conciliation
Let them join, fierce wars avoiding,
From sharp losses far!

ANTISTROPHE IV.

The native gods, strong to deliver,
With blood of oxen free-poured ever,
With laurel-branches failing never,
Piously adore!
HONOUR THY PARENTS: spurn not lightly
This prime statute sanctioned rightly;
Cling to this, a holy liver,
Steadfast evermore!

Re-enter DANAUS.

Danaus. Well hymned, my daughters! I commend your prayers;
But brace your hearts, nor fear, though I, your father,
Approach the bearer of unlooked-for news.
For from this consecrated hold of gods
I spy the ship; too gallantly it peers
To cheat mine eye. The sinuous sail I see,
The bulging fence-work on each side,[41] the prow
Fronted with eyes to track its watery way,[42]
True to the steerman's hint that sits behind,
And with no friendly bearing. On the deck
Appear the crew, their swarthy limbs more swart
By snow-white vests revealed: a goodly line
Of succour in the rear: but in the van
The admiral ship, with low-furled sail makes way
By the swift strokes of measured-beating oars.
Wait calmly ye, and with well-counselled awe
Cling to the gods; the while ye watch their coming,
Myself will hence, and straight return with aid
To champion our need.[43] For I must look for
Some herald or ambassador claiming you,
Their rightful prey, forthwith; but fear ye not,
Their harsh will may not be. This warning take
Should we with help be slow, remain you here
Nor leave these gods, your strength. Faint not: for surely
Comes the appointed hour, and will not stay,
When godless men to Jove just fine shall pay.

STROPHE I.

Chorus. Father, I tremble, lest the fleet-winged ships,
Ere thou return, shall land—soon—very soon!
O father, I tremble to stay, and not flee,
When the bands of the ruthless are near!

My flight to foreclose from the chase of my foes!
O father, I faint for fear!

Danaus. Fear not, my children. The accomplished vote
Of Argos saves you. They are champions sworn.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Chorus. They come—destruction's minions mad with hate,
Of fight insatiate: well thou know'st the men.
With their host many-counted, their ships dark-fronted,[44]
They are near, O father, how near!
Their ships stoutly-timbered, their crews swarthy-mem
bered,
Triumphant in wrath I fear!

Danaus. Even let them come. They'll find their match i
Argos;
A strong-limbed race with noon-day sweats well hardened.[4

STROPHE II.

Chorus. Only not leave me! Pray thee, father, stay!
Weak is a lonely woman. No Mars is in her.[46]
Dark-counselled, false, cunning-hearted are they,
Unholy, as obscene crows
On the feast of the altar that filthily prey;
They fear not the gods, my foes!

Danaus. 'Twill make our cause the stronger, daughters, if
Their crime be sacrilege, and their foes the gods.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Chorus. The trident and the sacred blazonry
Will not repel their violent hands, O father!
They are proud, haughty-hearted, a high-blown race;
They are hot, they are mad for the fray!
With the hound in their heart, and the dog in their fac
They will tear from the altar their prey.

Danaus. Dogs let them be, the world has wolves to master them
And good Greek corn is better than papyrus.[47]

Chorus. Being reasonless as brutes, unholy monsters,
And spurred with wrath we must beware their fury.

Danaus. 'Tis no light work to land a fleet. To find
Safe roads, sure anchorage, and to make fast
The cables, this not with mere thought is done.
The shepherds of the ships[48] are slow to feel
Full confidence, the more that on this coast
Harbours are few.[49] Besides, thou see'st the sun

Slants to the night; and still a prudent pilot
Fears in the dark. No man will disembark,
Trust me, till all are firmly anchored. Thou
Through all thy terrors still cling to the gods,
Thy most sure stay. Thy safety's pledged. For me
I'm old, but with the tongue of fluent youth
I'll speak for thee, a pleader without blame. [*Exit.*

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

O hilly land, high-honoured land,
What wait we now, poor fugitive band?
Some dark, dark cave
Show me, within thy winding strand,
To hide and save!
Would I might vanish in smoke, ascending
To Heaven, with Jove's light clouds dim-blending
In misty air,
Like wingless, viewless dust, and ending
In nothing there!

ANTISTROPHE I.

'Tis more than heart may bear. Quick Fear
My quaking life with dusky drear
Alarm surroundeth!
My father spied my ruin: sheer
Despair confoundeth.
Sooner, high-swung from fatal rope,
Here may I end both life and hope,
And strong Death bind me,
Than hated hearts shall reach their scope,
And shame shall find me!

STROPHE II.

Would I were throned in ether high,
Where snows are born, and through the sky
The white rack skurries! Would that I
Might sit sublime
On a hanging cliff where lone winds sigh,[60]
Where human finger never showed
The far-perched vultures' drear abode,
Nor goat may climb!

Thence sheer to leap, and end for ever
My life and name,
Ere forceful hands this heart deliver
To married shame!

ANTISTROPHE II.

There, where no friendly foot may stray,
There let me lie, my limbs a prey
To dogs and birds: I not gainsay:
'Twas wisely said,
Free from much woe who dies to-day
Shall be to-morrow. Rather than wedded
To whom I hate, let me be bedded
Now with the dead!
Or if there be, my life to free,
A way, declare it,
Ye gods!—a surgeon's cut for me,
My heart shall bear it!

STROPHE III.

Voice ye your sorrow! with the cry
Of doleful litany pierce the sky!
For freedom, for quick rescue cry
To him above!
Ruler of Earth, look from thy throne,
With eyes of love!
These deeds of violence wilt thou own,
Nor know thy prostrate suppliant's groan,
Almighty Jove?

ANTISTROPHE III.

Ægyptus' sons, a haughty race,
Follow my flight with sleepless chase,
With whoop and bay they scent my trace
To force my love.
Thy beam is true; both good and ill
Thy sure scales prove,
Thou even-handed! Mortals still
Reap fair fulfilment from thy will,
All-crowning Jove.

CHORUS, *in separate voices, and short hurried exclamations:*[51]

Voice 1. Ah me! he lands! he leaps ashore!
He strides with ruffian hands to hale us!

Voice 2. Cry, sisters, cry! swift help implore!
If here to cry may aught avail us!
Voice 3. Ah me! 'tis but the muffled roar
Of forceful storms soon to assail us!
Voice 1. Flee to the gods! to the altars cling!
Voice 2. By sea, by land, the ruthless foe
Grimly wantons in our woe!
Voice 3. Beneath thy wing shield us, O king!

Enter HERALD.

Herald. Hence to the ships! to the good ships fare ye![52]
Swiftly as your feet may bear ye!
Chorus. Tear us! tear us!
Rend us rather,
Torture and tear us!
From this body
Cut the head!
Gorily gather
Us to the dead!
Herald. Hence to the ships, away! away!
A curse on you, and your delay!
O'er the briny billowy way
Thou shalt go to-day, to-day!
Wilt thou stand, a mulish striver,
I can spur, a forceful driver;
Deftly, deftly, thou shalt trip
To the stoutly-timbered ship!
If to yield thou wilt not know,
Gorily, gorily thou shalt go!
An' thou be not madded wholly,
Know thy state, and quit thy folly!
Chorus. Help, ho! help, ho! help!
Herald. To the ships! to the ships away with me!
These gods of Argos what reck we?
Chorus. Never, O never
The nurturing river,
Of life the giver,
The healthful flood
That quickens the blood
Let me behold!
An Argive am I,*
From Inachus old,
These gods deny
Thy claim. Withhold!

* In this very perplexed passage I follow PAL. BOTHE'S conjecture, Ἀργεῖος, is very happy.

Herald. To the ships, to the ships, with march not slow,
Will ye, nill ye, ye must go!
Quickly, quickly, hence away!
Know thy master and obey!
Ere a worse thing thou shalt know—
Blows and beating—gently go!

STROPHE I.

Chorus. Worse than worsest
May'st thou know!
As thou cursest,
Curst be so!
The briny billow
O'er thee flow!
On sandy pillow
Bedded low,
'Neath Sarpedon's breezy brow,*
With the shifting sands shift thou!

Herald. Scream—rend your robes in rags!—call on the gods!
The Egyptian bark thou shalt not overleap.
Pour ye the bitter bootless wail at will!

ANTISTROPHE I.

Chorus. With fierce heart swelling
To work my woe,
With keen hate yelling
Barks the foe.
Broad Nile welling
O'er thee flow!
Find thy dwelling
Bedded low,
'Neath the towering Libyan waters,
Towering thou 'gainst Libya's daughters!

Herald. To the ships! to the ships! the swift ships even-oared
Quickly! no laggard shifts! the hand that drags thee
Will lord it o'er thy locks, not gently handled!

STROPHE II.

Chorus. O father, oh!
From the altar
The assaulter
Drags me to my woe!
Step by step, a torturing guider,
Like the slowly-dragging spider,

* A promontory in Cilicia.—STRABO, p. 670. PAL.

Cruel-minded so
Like a dream,
A dusky dream,
My hope away doth go!
O Earth, O Earth,
From death redeem!
O Earth, O Jove deliver!

Herald. Your Argive gods I know not; they nor nursed
My infant life, nor reared my riper age.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Chorus. O father, oh!
From the altar
The assaulter
Drags me to my woe!
A snake two-footed fiercely fretted
Swells beside me! from his whetted
Fangs, black death doth flow!
Like a dream,
A dusky dream,
My hope is vanished so!
O Earth, O Earth,
From death redeem!
O Earth, O Jove deliver!

Herald. To the ships! to the ships! Obey! I say, obey!
Pity thy robes, if not thy flesh—away!

STROPHE III.

Chorus. Ye chiefs of the city,
By force they subdue me!

Herald. Well! I must drag thee by the hair! come! come!
Point thy dull ears, and hear me!—come! come! come!

ANTISTROPHE III.

Chorus. I'm lost! I'm ruined!
O king, they undo me!

Herald. Thou shalt see kings enough anon, believe me,
Ægyptus' sons—kingless thou shalt not die.

Enter KING *with Attendants.*

King. Fellow, what wouldst thou? With what purpose here
Dost flout this land of brave Pelasgian men?
Deem'st thou us women? A barbarian truly
Art thou, if o'er the Greek to sport it thus

The fancy tempts thee. Nay, but thou art wrong
Both root and branch in this.
Herald. How wrong? Speak plainly
King. Thou art a stranger here, and dost not know
As a stranger how to bear thee.
Herald. This I know,
I lost my own, and what I lost I found.
King. Thy patrons* who, on this Pelasgian ground?
Herald. To find stray goods the world all over, Hermes
Is prince of patrons.[53]
King. Hermes is a god,
Thou, therefore, fear the gods.
Herald. And I do fear
The gods of the Nile.
King. We too have gods in Argos.
Herald. So be it: but, in Argos or in Africk,
My own's my own.
King. Who touches these reaps harm,
And that right soon.
Herald. No friendly word thou speak'st,
To welcome strangers.
King. Strangers are welcome here;
But not to spoil the gods.
Herald. These words of thine
To Ægyptus' sons be spoken, not to me.
King. I take no counsel, or from them, or thee.
Herald. Thou—who art thou? for I must plainly make
Rehearsal to my masters—this my office
Enforces—both by whom, and why, unjustly
I of this kindred company of women
Am robbed. A serious strife it is; no bandying
Of words from witnesses, no silver passed
From hand to hand will lay such ugly strife;
But man for man must fall, and noblest souls
Must dash their lives away.
King. For what I am,
You, and your shipmates, soon enough shall know me.
These maids, if with the softly suasive word
Thou canst prevail, are thine; to force we never
Will yield the suppliant sisters; thus the people
With one acclaim have voted; 'tis nailed down
Thus to the letter. So it must remain.

* πρόξενοι.—See Note 19 to page 226 above.

Thou hast my answer, not in tablets graven,
Or in the volumed scroll, all stamped and sealed,
But from a free Greek mouth. Dost understand me?
Hence quickly from my sight!

Herald. Of this be sure,
A war thou stirrest, in which, when once begun,
The males will be the stronger.

King. We, too, have males
In Argos, lusty-blooded men, who drink
Good wine, not brewed from barley.* As for you,
Ye virgins, fearless follow where these guides
Shall lead. Our city strongly girt with wall,
And high-reared tower receives you. We can boast
Full many a stately mansion; stateliest piled
My palace stands, work of no feeble hands.
Right pleasant 'tis in populous floors to lodge
With many a fellow-tenant: some will find
A greater good in closely severed homes,
That have no common gates: of these thou hast
The ample choice: take what shall like thee most.
Know me thy patron, and in all things know
My citizens thy shield, whose vote hath pledged
Thy safety; surer guarantee what wouldst thou?

Chorus. Blessing for thy blessing given,
Flow to thee, divine Pelasgian!
But for our advisal forthwith
Send, we pray thee, for our father;
He the firm, the far foreseeing,
How to live, and where to lodge us,
Duly shall direct. For ever
Quick to note the faults of strangers
Sways the general tongue; though we
Hope all that's good and best from thee.

King [*to the attendant maids*]:
Likewise you, ye maids attendant
For his daughters' service, wisely
Portioned by the father, here
Be your home secure,
Far from idle-bruited babblings,
'Neath my wing to dwell!

* "Potui humor ex hordeo aut frumento in quandam similitudinem vini corruptus."—Tacitus de mor. Geom. c. 23.

Enter DANAUS, *attended by an Argive guard.*

Danaus. Daughters! if so the Olympian gods deserve
Your sacrifices, your libations, surely
Argos no less may claim them! Argos truly
Your Saviour in worst need! With eager ears
They drank my tale, indignant the foul deeds
Of our fell-purposed cousinship they heard,
And for my guard this goodly band they set me
Of strong spear-bearing men, lest being slain
By the lurking lance of some insidious foe
My death bring shame to Argos. Such high honor,
From hearts where kindness moves the friendly deed,
They heaped the sire withal, that you, the daughters,
In father's stead should own them. For the rest,
To the chaste precepts graven on your heart
That oft I gave, one timely warning add,
That time, which proveth all, approve your lives
Before this people; for 'gainst the stranger, calumny
Flows deftly from the tongue, and cheap traducement
Costs not a thought. I charge ye, therefore, daughters,
Your age being such that turns the eyes of men
To ready gaze, in all ye do consult
Your father's honor: such ripe bloom as yours
No careless watch demands: so fair a flower
Wild beasts and men, monsters of all degrees,
Winged and four-footed, wantonly will tear.
Her luscious-dropping fruits the Cyprian * hangs
In the general view, and publishes their praise;[54]
That whoso passes, and beholds the pomp
Of shapeliest beauty, feels the charmed dart
That shoots from eye to eye, and vanquished falls
By strong desire. Give, therefore, jealous heed
That our long toils, and ploughing the deep sea
Not fruitless fall; but be your portment such
As breeds no shame to us, nor to our enemies
Laughter. A double lodgment for our use,
One from the state, the other from the king,
Rentless we hold. All things look bright. This only,
Your father's word, remember. More than life
Hold a chaste heart in honor.

Chorus. The high Olympians
Grant all thy wish! For us and our young bloom,

* Venus.

Fear nothing, father: for unless the gods
Have forged new counsels, we ev'n to the end
Will tread the trodden path, and will not bend.

CHORAL HYMN.[55]

STROPHE I.

Semi-Chorus 1. Lift ye the solemn hymn!
High let your pæans brim!
Praise in your strain
Gods that in glory reign
High o'er the Argive plain,
High o'er each castled hold,
Where Erasinus old *
Winds to the main!

Semi-Chorus 2 [*to the attendant maids*]:
Sing, happy maids, with me!
Loud with responsive glee
Voice ye the strain!
Praise ye the Argive shore,
Praise holy Nile no more,
Wide where his waters roar,
Mixed with the main!

ANTISTROPHE I.

Semi-Chorus 1. Lift ye the solemn hymn!
High let your pæans brim!
Praise in your strain
Torrents that bravely swell
Fresh through each Argive dell,
Broad streams that lazily
Wander, and mazily
Fatten the plain.

Semi-Chorus 2. Sing, sisters, sing with me
Artemis chaste! may she
List to the strain!
Never, O never may
Marriage with fearful sway
Bind me; nor I obey
Hatefullest chain!

STROPHE II.

Semi-Chorus 1. Yet, mighty praise be thine[56]
Cyprian queen divine!
Hera, with thee I join,

* This river and the Inachus flow into the Argolic gulf, both near the city of Argos, taking their rise in the mountain ridge that separates Argos from Arcadia.

Nearest to Jove.
Subtly conceiving all,
Wiseliest weaving all,
Thy will achieving all
Nobly by love!

Semi-Chorus 2. With thee Desire doth go;
Peitho,* with suasive flow
Bending the willing foe,
Marches with thee.
Lovely Harmonia[57]
Knows thee; and, smote with awe,
Strong kings obey the law
Whispered by thee.

STROPHE IV.

Semi-Chorus 1. Yet must I fear the chase,[58]
Sail spread in evil race,
War with a bloody pace
Spurred after me.
Why to this Argive shore
Came they with plashing oar,
If not with sorrow's store
Treasured for me?

Semi-Chorus 2. Comes fated good or ill,
Wait we in patience still!
No power may thwart his will
Jove, mighty Jove.
Laden with sorrow's store
Virgins in days of yore
Praised, when their grief was o'er,
Jove, mighty Jove.

Semi-Chorus 1. Jove, mighty Jove, may he
From wedded force for me
Rescue prepare!

Semi-Chorus 2. Fair fall our maiden lot!
But mighty Jove may not
Yield to thy prayer.

Semi-Chorus 1. Know'st thou what woes may be
Stored yet by Fate for me?

Semi-Chorus 2. Jove and his hidden plan
Sight of the sharpest man
Searcheth in vain;
Thou in thy narrow span
Wisely remain!

* The goddess of Persuasion.

Semi-Chorus 1. Wisely my thought may fare
Tell me, O tell me where?
Semi-Chorus 2. 'Gainst what the gods ordain
Fret not thy heart in vain!

STROPHE.

Semi-Chorus 1. Save me, thou chief of gods, great Jove,
From violent bonds of hated love,
Even as the Inachian maid of yore
Thy hand set free from labour sore,
What time thou soothed with touch divine
Her weary frame,
And with a friendly force benign
Thy healing came.

ANTISTROPHE.

Semi-Chorus 2. May the woman's cause prevail!
And, when two certain ills assail,
Be ours the less: and Justice fair
For the just shall still declare.
Ye mighty gods o'er human fates
Supremely swaying,
On you my prayer, my fortune waits,
Your will obeying.

THE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES

A LYRICO-DRAMATIC SPECTACLE

I cannot think but curses climb the sky,
And there awake God's gentle-sleeping peace.

SHAKESPEKE.

Alle Schuld rächt sich auf Erden.

GOETHE.

PERSONS

ETEOCLES, Son of Oedipus.
MESSENGER.
CHORUS OF THEBAN VIRGINS.
ISMENE, } Sisters of Eteocles.
ANTIGONE, }
HERALD.

SCENE—*The Acropolis of Thebes.*

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

ONE of the most indisputable laws of the moral world, and, when seriously considered, perhaps the most awful one, is that principle of hereditary dependence, which connects the sins of one generation, and often of one individual, by an indissoluble bond, with the fortunes of another. In the closely compacted machinery of the moral world no man can be ignorant, or foolish, or vicious to himself. The most isolated individual by the very act of his existence, as he necessarily inhales, so he likewise exhales, a social atmosphere, either healthy so far, or so far unhealthy, for the race. Nothing in the world is independent either of what co-exists with it, or of what precedes it. The present, in particular, is everywhere at once the child of the past, and the parent of the future. It is no doubt true that a foolish father does not always beget a foolish son. There are counteracting influences constantly at work to prevent the fatal tendency to degeneration, of which Horace speaks so feelingly—

> Aetas parentum pejor avis tulit
> Nos nequiores, mox daturos
> Progeniem vitiosiorem,

but the "DELICTA MAJORUM IMMERITUS LUES" of the same poet remains a fearful reality in the daily administration of the world, which no serious-thinking man can afford to disregard. In the ancient law of Moses, as in the most famous systems of Christian theology, this principle plays a prominent part; and awful as its operation is, often sweeping whole generations into ruin, and smiting whole nations with a chronic leprosy, for the folly or extravagance of an ephemeral individual, we shall not be surprised to find it equally conspicuous in the literature of so subtle a people as the Greeks. The Hellenic mind, no doubt, was too sunny and too healthy to allow itself to be encased and imprisoned with this idea, as with an iron mail; but as a mysterious dark background of moral existence it was recognised in its highest power; and nowhere so distinctly, and with such terrible iteration, as in those lyrical exhibitions of solemn, religious, and legendary faith, which we call tragedy.

Among the other serious ethico-religious legends with which th scanty remains of the rich Greek tragedy have made us mo familiar, the dark fates of two famous families—the Pelopidae ar the Labdacidae—force themselves upon our attention with a marke distinctness. How the evil genius (ἀλάστωρ) of inherited gu revealed itself in the blood-stained track of the descendants Tantalus we have seen on the large scale of a complete trilogy in th first volume; the play to which we now introduce the reader is a exhibition of the same stern law of moral concatenation, in one the scenes of the dark story of the Theban family of the Labdacida Labdacus, the father of this unfortunate race, is traced back in th legendary genealogy to the famous Phœnician settler, Cadmu being removed from him by only one generation.* This head of th family appears tainted with no moral guilt of an extraordinary kin but his son Laius figures in the legend, not like Pelops in th Pelopidan story, as a murderer, but as a licentious and a lustf character. Yielding to the violent impulses of unnatural passion he is said to have carried off from Elis, Chrysippus, the son Pelops; whereupon the injured father pronounced against the u holy ravisher the appropriate curse that he should die childless, o if he did beget children, that himself should lose his life by th hands of those to whom he had been the means of giving We see here exemplified that grand principle of retaliation (*lex talionis*), "*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*," which stan out so prominently in the laws of Moses, and is so agreeable to th moral instincts of the human heart. Laius was to perish by his ov progeny, because, in the irregular gratification of the procreati instinct, he had sinned against Nature. The curse spoken again him by Pelops was the wrathful expression of one of Nature greatest laws; in whatever way we seek violently to obtain happ ness contrary to the sober course of the divine arrangements, in th way we are sure with our own hands to work our own destructio This is inevitable. Accordingly, that the direct sanction of the go might be added to the utterance of an aggrieved human heart, th legend represents the lustful offender as consulting the oracle Delphi, whether he might not with safety disregard the imprecatio of Pelops, and beget children by his wife Iocaste (called Epicaste Homer, Od. XI. 271); and receiving the ominous answer—

> Sow not the seed of children, in despite
> Of the gods: for if thou shalt beget a son,

* Eurip. Phœnissae. Prolog., and Argument to the same from the Cod. Guelpherb in Matthiae.

† πρῶτος ἐν ἀνθρώποις τὴν ἀρρενοφθορίαν ἐυρων.—Compare ROMANS i. 27.

Him who begat shall the begotten slay,
And all thy house in bloody ruin perish.*

ıt the divine oracle, as was to have been expected from the aracter of the questioner, was given in vain. Laius had consulted e oracle not that he might know and obey the divine will, but that might, if possible, escape from the terrible consequences of the rse of Pelops, and yet gratify his natural desire of having offspring. ıe result was natural. In a moment of forgetfulness, induced by e free use of that mother of many evils, wine, he neglected the ⁄ine warning; and, from his fatal embrace, a child was born, stined in the course of the accomplishment of the ancient curse, th to suffer many monstrous misfortunes in his own person, and transmit guilt and misery to another generation. This child was edipus,† so named from the piercing of his feet by nails, and sub- quent exposure on Mount Cithaeron, a device contrived by his ther, in order to escape the fulfilment of the divine oracle. But it not possible, as Homer frequently inculcates, to deceive the mind the gods. The helpless infant, the child of destiny, is found (like omulus), by some shepherds, and by them taken to Polybus king of rinth. Here the foundling is brought up as the son of that monarch; t, on one occasion, being taunted by some of his youthful comrades th the reproach that he is not really the son of Polybus, but a herless foundling, he goes forth to the oracle of Delphi, and to e wide world, to clear up what had been more wisely left in the rk; and here his god-sent misfortunes overtake him, and the evil nius of his father drives the innocent son blindfold into inevitable e. The Pythoness, according to her wont, returned an answer re doubtful than the question. Oedipus was told not who his her was, but that a dark destiny hung over him, to kill his father, d to commit incest with his mother. Knowing no parents but se whom he had left at Corinth, he proceeded on his wanderings, a direction the opposite of that by which he had come; and, on e road between Delphi and Daulis,‡ met a person of consequence, th a charioteer and an attendant, in a car. The charioteer imme- ately ordered the foot traveller, somewhat insolently, after the nner of aristocratic satellites, to get out of the way; which rude- ss the hot youth resenting, a scuffle ensued, in which the charioteer

* Μὴ σπεῖρε τέκνων ἄλοκα δαιμόνων βίᾳ, κ.τ.λ.—Eurip. Phœnis. 19.

† οἰδέω to swell, and πούς a foot; literally *swell-foot*. Welcker remarks that there is eculiar significancy in the appellations connected with this legend; even Λάϊος being nected with λαικάζω, λαισκαπρος, and other similar words—(*Trilog.* p. 355)—but is dangerous ground.

‡ The σχιστὴ ὁδος.—See Wordsworth's Greece, p. 21.

and his master were slain, while the attendant fled. The murder
prince was Laius ; and Oedipus, unwittingly, nay, doing everything
could to elude the fate, had slain his own father. But the ancie
Fury, for a season, concealed her vengeance, and allowed a br
glory to be shed round her victim, that he might thereafter be plung
in more terrible darkness. The Sphynx, a monstrous creature,
Egyptian birth, half virgin, half lion, had been sent by wrathful Ma
to desolate the Theban country, devouring, with her bloody jav
whosoever could not solve her famous riddle. When depopulati
proceeded at a fearful rate from this cause, the Thebans promis
Iocaste, the widow of Laius, and queen of the country, in marriag
to him who should succeed in explaining the enigma. Oedipus w
successful ; and, becoming king of Thebes, was married, in ignoran
to his own mother. Thus the net of destiny was drawn closer a
closer round its victim ; but the hour of doom was not yet con
Joined in this unnatural wedlock, the unfortunate son of La
became the father of two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, and of t
daughters, Antigone and Ismene. Circumstances (which Sophoc
narrates in his Oedipus Tyrannus) afterwards bringing the story
Oedipus' life and the nature of his connection with Iocaste to lig
the unfortunate old king looking upon himself as an object of hatr
to the gods, and unworthy to look upon the day, tore out his ey
and was confined by his sons—whether from cruelty or superstiti
—in a separate house, and treated otherwise in a manner th
appeared to him disrespectful and unkind.* Enraged at this tre
ment, he pronounced an imprecation against them, that they shou
one day DIVIDE THEIR INHERITED LAND BY STEEL ; whereup
they, to render any hostile collision impossible, made an agreeme
to exercise kingly authority over the whole Theban territory, ea
for a year at a time, while the other should leave the count
Eteocles, as the elder, reigned first ; but when the appointed te
came round, like other holders of power, he showed himself loath
quit ; and Polynices, fleeing to Argos, sought assistance fr
Adrastus, king of that country. This prince, along with the Ætoli
Tydeus, the father of Diomede, and other chiefs, marched agai
Thebes with a great armament, in order to force Eteocles
yield the yearly tenure of the throne to his brother, according
agreement. The appearance of this armament before the ga
of the Cadmean city, and its sad issue, in the death, by their o

* It is particularly mentioned in the oldest form of the legend, that he considered
sons had not sent him his due share of the flesh offered in the family sacrifice.—Schol
Soph. O. C. 1375. This is alluded to in the fifth antistrophe of the third great ch
chaunt of this play, v. 768. WELL. See my Note.

hands, of the two hostile brothers, form the subject of the present play.

From this rapid sketch, the reader will see plainly that the dismal story of Laius and Oedipus, and his children, affords materials for a whole series of tragedies; and that, in fact, "THE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES" is only one of the last acts of a great consecutive legendary history, of which each part is necessary to explain the other. This close connection of the subjects naturally suggests the question, whether our play, as we now have it, stood alone in dramatic representation, or whether it was not—like other pieces in this volume—only a subordinate part of a large dramatic whole. We know for certain that Æschylus wrote at least four plays, besides the present, of which the materials were taken from the cycle of this Theban legend—namely, LAIUS, OEDIPUS, THE SPHYNX, and the ELEUSINIANS;* and it has been not unplausibly conjectured that some of his other plays, of which the names are preserved, belong to the same series.† In what precise connection, however, the existing play stood to any of the rest in actual representation, there were, till very recently, no satisfactory means of judging; and accordingly no scanty wealth of erudite speculation (after the German fashion), made to look like science, was spent upon the subject. Now, at length it has been announced, that the *διδασκαλία*, containing the actual order of representation of four of these plays, has been discovered;‡ and, if the document be genuine, we are enabled to assert that, in the 78th Olympiad, Æschylus gained the tragic prize with the tetralogy, of LAIUS, OEDIPUS, THE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES, and the SPHYNX, a satiric drama.

With regard to the merits of the present piece, while its structure exhibits, in the most striking manner, the deficient skill of the early dramatists, its spirit is everywhere manly and noble, and instinct with the soul of the warlike actions which it describes. The best parts are epic, not dramatic—namely, those in which the Messenger describes the different characters and appearance of the seven chiefs posted each at a separate gate of the Cadmean city. The drama concludes with a Theban coronach or wail over the dead bodies of the self-slain brothers; for the proper relishing of which, the imaginative reproduction of some appropriate music is indispensable. The introduction after this of the Herald, announcing the decree of the Theban senate, whereby burial is denied to the body of Polynices,

* The subject of "The Eleusinians" was the burial of the dead bodies of the chiefs who had fallen before Thebes, through the mediation of Theseus.—See Plutarch, Life of that hero, c. 29.

† See Welcker's Trilogie, p. 359, etc.

‡ Classical Museum, No. XXV. p. 312.

and the heroic display of sisterly affection on the part of Antigo
are—if this really was the last piece of a trilogy—altogether forei
both to the action and to the tone of the tragedy, and must
regarded as a blunder. If Schiller, and even Shakespere, on oc
sions, could err in such matters, much more Æschylus.

THE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES

Eteocles. Ye citizens of Cadmus! he who sits
Holding the helm in the high poop of state,
Watchful, with sleepless eyes, must, when he speaks,
Speak words that suit the time. If we succeed,
The gods will have the praise; but should we fail
(Which may averting Jove from me avert,[1]
And from this Theban city!), I alone
Must bear the up-heaped murmurings of the whole,
A motley-voiced lament. Ye men of Thebes,
Not manhood's vigour only, but ye also
Who lack ripe years, and ye whose green old age
Nurses unwithered strength,* arm, and redeem
Your country's honor from a cruel blot.
Let not the citadel of your ancient sires,
The altars of your native gods, your children,
Nor the dear mother Earth, that nursed you, blame
The slackness of your love—the nurse who bore
Your creeping childhood on her fostering soil,
And through your slow growth up to firmer years,
Toiled that the strong arms of her faithful sons,
Might shield her need. Up to this hour the god
Inclines to us; though close hedged in by the foe,
The vantage hath been ours. But now the seer,
The shepherd of prophetic birds' revolving
In his ear and inward sense deep-pondered truths,[2]
By no false art, though without help from fire,
Even he soothsaying sings that the Argive camp
Holds midnight council to attack the city.
Therefore be ready; mount the battlements;
Top every tower; crown every parapet;
Fence every gate with valiant-hearted men,
Well harnessed for the fight: and never fear
This trooping alien foe. The gods will give
A happy issue. Myself have sent out scouts,
Sure men, not wont to linger. Their advice
Shall shield us from surprise.

* See PALEY's Note.

Enter MESSENGER.

Mess. Eteocles,
Most excellent lord of Thebes! what I have seen
With mine own eyes, no idle unvouched tale,
I bring thee from the camp. Seven warlike chiefs
I saw, in solemn sacrifice assembled:
Holding the head of the devoted ox,
Over the shield with iron rimmed they dipped
Their hands in the steaming blood, and swore an oath,
By Mars, Enyo, and blood-loving Terror,[3]
Either to raze the walls of Thebes, and plunder
The citadel of Cadmus, or else drench
This soil with Argive blood. Then, as for death
Prepared, they decked the chariot of Adrastus[4]
With choice love-tokens to their Argive kin,
Dropping a tear, but with their mouths they gave
No voice. An iron-hearted band are they,
Breathing hot war, like lions when their eye
Looks instant battle. Such my news; nor I
Slow to report; for in the camp I left them
Eager to share among their several bands
Our gates by lot. Therefore, bestir thee; fence
Each gate with the choicest men: dash all delay;
For now the Argive host, near and more near,
All panoplied comes on; the dark-wreathed dust
Rolls, and the snowy foam of snorting chargers
Stains the pure Theban soil. Like a wise pilot
That scents the coming gale, hold thou the city
Tight, ere the storm of Ares on our heads
Burst pitiless. Loud the mainland wave is roaring.
This charge be thine: myself, a sleepless spy,
Will bring thee sure word from the hostile camp:
Safe from without, so ye be strong within. [*Exit*

Eteocles. O Jove! O Earth! O Gods that keep the city!
And thou fell Fury of my father's curse! *
Destroy not utterly this Cadméan seat
Rent, razed, deracinated by the foe!
Yield not our pious hearths, where the loved speech
Of Hellas echoes, to a stranger host!
Let not the free-born Theban bend the neck,
To slavery thralled, beneath a tyrant's yoke!
Be ye our strength! our common cause we plead;
A prosperous state hath cause to bless the gods. [*Exit*

* See Introductory Remarks.

I.

The CHORUS[5] *enter the scene in great hurry and agitation.*

O wailing and sorrow, O wailing and woe!
Their tents they have left, many-banded they ride,
And onward they tramp with the prance of pride,
The horsemen of the foe.
The dark-volumed dust-cloud that rides on the gale,
Though voiceless, declares a true messenger's tale;
With clattering hoofs, on and on still they ride;[6]
It swells on my ear, loud it rusheth and roareth,
As a fierce wintry torrent precipitous poureth,
Rapidly lashing the mountain side.

Hear me ye gods, and ye goddesses hear me!
The black harm prevent that swells near and more near me!
As a wave on the shore when the blast beats the coast,
So breaks o'er the walls, from the white-shielded host,[7]
The eager war-cry, the sharp cry of fear,
As near still it rolls, and more near.

II.

The CHORUS *become more and more agitated. They speak one to another in short hurried exclamations, and in great confusion.*

Chorus 1. To which of the gods and the goddesses now
Shall I pay my vow?
Chorus 2. Shall I cling to the altar, and kneeling embrace
The guardian gods of the Theban race?
Tutti. Ye blissful Olympians, throned sublime,
In the hour of need, in the urgent time,
May the deep drawn sigh,
And the heart's strong cry
Ascend not in vain to your seats sublime!
Chorus 1. Heard ye the shields rattle, heard ye the spear?
In this dark day of dole,
With chaplet and stole[8]
Let us march to the temples, and worship in fear!
Chorus 2. I heard the shield's rattle, and spear clashed on spear
Came stunning my ear.
Tutti. O Ares, that shines in the helmet of gold,[9]
Thine own chosen city wilt thou behold
To slavery sold?
O Ares, Ares, wilt thou betray
Thy Theban home to-day?

III.

The CHORUS *crown the altars of the gods, and then, falling on their knees, sing the following Theban Litany, in one continuous chaunt.*

Patron gods that keep the city,
Look, look down upon our woe,
Save this band of suppliant virgins
From the harsh-enslaving foe!
For a rush of high-plumed warriors
Round the city of the free,
By the blast of Ares driven,
Roars, like billows of the sea.
Father Jove the consummator,*
Save us from the Argive spear;
For their bristling ranks enclose us,
And our hearts do quake with fear,
And their steeds with ringing bridles [10]
Knell destruction o'er the land;
And seven chiefs, with lance in hand,
Fixed by lot to share the slaughter,
At the seventh gate proudly stand.
Save us, Pallas, war-delighting
Daughter of immortal Jove!
Save us, lord of billowy ocean!
God of pawing steeds, Poseidon,[11]
Join thine aid to his above,
And with thy fish-piercing trident
Still our hearts, our fears remove.
Save us Ares! father Ares,
Father now thy children's need!
Save us Cypris, mother of Thebans,[12]
For we are thy blood indeed!
Save us, save us, Wolf-Apollo,[13]
Be a wolf against the foe!
Whet thine arrows, born of Leto,
Leto's daughter bend thy bow!

IV.

The Litany is here interrupted by the noise of the besiegers storming the city, and is continued in a hurried irregular manner.

Chorus 1. I hear the dread roll of the chariots of war!
Tutti. O holy Hera!

* See Note 35 to the Suppliants, p. 235 above.

Chorus 2. And the axles harsh-creaking with dissonant jar!
Tutti. O Artemis dear!
Chorus 1. And the vext air is madded with quick-branished spears.
Semi-Chorus 1. To Thebes, our loved city, what hope now appears?
Semi-Chorus 2. And when shall the gods bring an end of our fears?
Chorus 1. Hark! hark! stony hail the near rampart is lashing!
Tutti. O blest Apollo!
Chorus 2. And iron-bound shield against shield is clashing!
Tutti. The issue of war with the gods abideth,
The doubtful struggle great Jove decideth.
O Onca, blest Onca,[14] whose worshippers ever
Invoke thee, the queen of the Oncan gate,
The seven-gated city deliver, deliver,[15]
Thou guardian queen of the gate.

V.

The CHORUS *unite again into a full band, and sing the Finale of the Litany in regular Strophe and Antistrophe.*

STROPHE.

Gods and goddesses almighty!
Earthly and celestial powers!
Of all good things consummators,
Guardians of the Theban towers!
Save the spear-encompassed city
From a foreign-speaking foe![16]
Hear the virgin band, that prays thee
With the out-stretched arms of woe!

ANTISTROPHE.

Gods and demigods! the city
Aid that on your aid depends,
Watch around us, and defend us;
He is strong whom God defends.
Bear the incense in remembrance
Of our public sacrifice;
From a people rich in offerings
Let no prayer unanswered rise!

Re-enter ETEOCLES.

Eteocles. Answer me this, insufferable brood!
Is this your wisdom, this your safety-note

To Theban soldiers, this your war-cry, thus
In prostrate woe clasping the guardian gods,
To scream and wail the vain lament of fools?
I pray the gods, in good or evil days,
May never fate be mine to lodge with women.
When fortune's brave, their pride's unbearable;
But, comes a thought of fear, both hall and forum
Must ring with their laments. Why run ye thus
From street to street, into the hearts of men
Scattering dastardy, and bruiting fear?
Nay, but ye chiefly help the enemy's cause
Without the gate, and we by friends within
Are more besieged; such aid expect from women!
Thebans give ear; whoso shall disobey
My word in Thebes, man, woman, old, or young,
Whoe'er he be, against himself he writes
Black sentence to be stoned by the public hand.
Without the gates let brave men fight; within
Let women tend their children, and their webs.
Hear ye, or hear ye not? or do I speak
To the deaf?

STROPHE I.

Chorus. Son of Oedipus be witness!
Should not terror rob our wits,
When we hear the roll of chariots,
Whirling wheels, and creaking axles,
And the unresting tramp of horses
Champing fierce their fire-forged bits?

Eteocles. What then? when with the storm the good sh
labours,
Shall the wise helmsman leave his proper post,
To clasp the painted gods upon the prow?[17]

ANTISTROPHE I.

Chorus. When we heard war's rattling hail-drift
Round our ramparts wildly rave,
Trusting to the gods of Cadmus,
Spurred by fear, we hither hurried,
Here to pray, and clasp the statues
Of the good gods strong to save.

Eteocles. Pray that our well-manned walls be strong to save u
Else will the gods help little. Who knows not
That, when a city falls, they pass to the Victor?[18]

STROPHE II.

Chorus. Never, never may the council
Of the assembled gods desert us,
While I live, and look on day!
Never, never may the stranger
Rush through the streets, while midnight burning
Lights the robber to his prey!

Eteocles. Weak prayers confound wise counsel. Know ye not
Obedience is the mother of success,
And pledge of victory. So the wise have spoken.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Chorus. But the gods are strong. When mortals
Stretch the arm in vain to save us,
Help is waiting from above.
When dark night enveils the welkin,
And thick-mantled ruin gathers,
They enclasp us round with love.

Eteocles. Leave sacrifice and oracles to men,
And 'gainst the imminent foe pray to the gods.
Women should hold their tongues, and keep their homes.

STROPHE III.

Chorus. By the strength of gods the city
Each rude tide hath learnt to stem;
Who shall charge us with offending,
When we make our vows to them?

Eteocles. Your vows I grudge not, nor would stint your prayers;
But this I say, blow not your fears about,
Nor taint the general heart with apprehension.

ANTISTROPHE III.

Chorus. Startled by the blare of battle,
Hearing clash of combat fell,
With a quaking heart I hied me
To this sacred citadel.

Eteocles. And when ye hear that some are dead or wounded,
Drag not the news with wailings through the town;
For blood of mortals is the common food[19]
Of the war god.

Chorus. Hark! the angry steeds are snorting.

Eteocles. Hear what thou wilt; but do not hear aloud.

Chorus. The Earth beneath me groans, the wall is shaking.

Eteocles. The walls are mine to uphold. Pray you, be silent.
Chorus. Woe's me, the clash of arms, loud and more loud,
Rings at the gate!
Eteocles. And thou the loudest!—Peace!
Chorus. Great council of the gods, O save us! save us!
Eteocles. Perdition seize thee! thy words flow like water.
Chorus. O patron gods, save me from captive chains!
Eteocles. Thy fear makes captive me, and thee, and all.
Chorus. O mighty Jove, fix with thy dart the foe!
Eteocles. O Jove, of what strange stuff hast thou made women
Chorus. Men are no better, when their city's captured.
Eteocles. Dost clasp the gods again, and scream and howl?
Chorus. Fear hurries on my overmastered tongue.
Eteocles. One small request I have; beseech you hear me.
Chorus. Speak: I am willing, if I can, to please thee.
Eteocles. Please me by silence; do not fright thy friends.
Chorus. I speak no more: and wait my doom with them.
Eteocles. This word is wiser than a host of wails.
And now, instead of running to and fro,
Clinging to every image as you pass,
Pray to the gods with sober supplication,
To aid the Theban cause: and, when ye hear
My vow, lift up a blithe auspicious shout,
A sacred hymn, a sacrificial cry,
As brave Greek hearts are wont, whose voice shall speak
Sure confidence to friends, and to the foe
Dismay. Now, hear my vow. If they who keep
The city, keep it now from the Argive spear,
I vow to them, and to the patron gods
Of field and forum, and the holy fount
Of Dirce and Ismenus' sacred stream,[20]
That blood of lambs and bulls shall wash their altars,
And spear-pierced trophies, Argive harnesses,
Bedeck their holy halls. Such be your prayers;
Not sighs and sobs, and frantic screams, that shake
The hearts of men, but not the will of gods.
Meanwhile, with six choice men, myself the seventh,
I'll gallantly oppose these boastful chiefs
That block our outlets. Timely thus I'll gag
The swift-winged rush of various-bruited news,
That in the hour of danger blazes fear. [*Exit*

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

Well thou speakest; but unsleeping
Terrors shake my virgin frame,
And the blasts of war around me
Fan my fears into a flame.
As the dove her dovelets nursing,
Fears the tree-encircling serpent,
Fatal neighbour of her nest;
Thus the foe, our walls enclosing,
Thrills with ceaseless fears my breast.
Hark! in hurrying throngs careering
Rude they beat our Theban towers,
And a rain of rock-torn fragments
On the roofs of Cadmus showers!
Save us, gods that keep the city,
Save us, Jove-begotten Powers!

ANTISTROPHE I.

Say what region shall receive ye,
When the Theban soil is waste?
When pure Dirce's fount is troubled,
From what waters shall ye taste?
Theban soil, the deepest, richest,
That with fruits of joy is pregnant,
Dirce, sweetest fount that runs,
From Poseidon earth-embracing,
And from Tethys' winding sons.[21]
Patron-gods maintain your glory,
Sit in might enthroned to-day:
Smite the foe with fear; fear stricken
Let them fling their arms away:
Hear our sharp shrill-piercing wailings,
When for Cadmus' weal we pray!

STROPHE II.

Sad it were, and food for weeping,
To behold these walls Ogygian,
By the stranger spearman mounted,
Levelled by the Argive foe,
And these towers by god-sent vengeance
Laid in crumbling ashes low.
Sad it were to see the daughters,

And the sonless mothers grey,
Of old Thebes, with hair dishevelled,
And rent vestments, even as horses
Dragged by the mane, a helpless prey;
Sad to hear the victors' clamour
Mingling with the captive's moan,
And the frequent-clanking fetter
Struggling with the dying groan.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Sad, most sad, should hands unlicensed
Rudely pluck our opening blossom;
Sad—yea better far to die!
Changing nuptial torch and chamber
For dark homes of slavery.
Ah! my soul within me trembles,
When it shapes the sight of shame,
Swift the chase of lawless murder,
And the swifter chase of flame;
Black the surly smoke upwreathing,
Cries, confusion, choking heat;
Shrine-polluting, man-subduing
Mars, wild borne from street to street!

STROPHE III.

Towers and catapults surrounding,
And the greedy spear upswallowing
Man by man, its gory food:
And the sucking infants clinging
To the breasts that cannot bear them,
Cries to ears that cannot hear them
Mingle with their mother's blood.
Plunder, daughter of Confusion,
Startles Plenty from his lair,
And the robber with the robber
Bargains for an equal share;
Gods! in such a night of terrors
How shall helpless maidens fare?

ANTISTROPHE III.

Planless is the strife of Plunder.
Fruits of patient years are trampled
Reckless in the moment's grave;
And the maids that tend the household,

With a bitter eye of weeping,
See the treasured store of summers
Hurried by the barren wave.
Woe, deep woe, waits captive maidens,
To an untried thraldom led,
Bound, by chains of forced affection,
To some haughty husband's bed:
Sooner, sooner may I wander
Sister of the sunless dead!

emi-Chorus 1. Methinks I see the scout sent by the king:
Doubtless he brings us news; his tripping feet
Come swift as wheels that turn on willing axles.

emi-Chorus 2. The king himself, the son of Oedipus,
Comes in the exact nick to hear his tidings:
With rapid and unequal steps he too
Urges the way.

Enter MESSENGER *and* ETEOCLES *from opposite sides.*

Iess. What I have seen I come
To tell; the movements of the foe, the station
That lot hath given each champion at the gates.
First at the Prœtian portal Tydeus stands,[22]
Storming against the seer, who wise forbids
To pass Ismenus' wave, before the sacrifice
Auspicious smiles. But he, for battle burning,
Fumes like a fretful snake in the sultry noon,
Lashing with gibes the wise Oiclidan seer,[23]
Whose prudence he interprets dastardy,
Cajoling death away. Thus fierce he raves,
And shakes the overshadowing crest sublime,
His helmet's triple mane, while 'neath his shield
The brazen bells ring fear.[24] On his shield's face
A sign he bears as haughty as himself,
The welkin flaming with a thousand lights,
And in its centre the full moon shines forth,
Eye of the night, and regent of the stars.
So speaks his vaunting shield: on the stream's bank
He stands, loud-roaring, eager for the fight,
As some fierce steed that frets against the bit,
And waits with ruffling neck, and ears erect,
To catch the trumpet's blare. Who will oppose
This man? what champion, when the bolts are broken,
Shall plant his body in the Prœtian gate?

Eteocles. No blows I fear from the trim dress of war,
No wounds from blazoned terrors. Triple crests
And ringing bells bite not without the spear;
And for this braggart shield, with starry night
Studded, too soon for the fool's wit that owns it
The scutcheon may prove seer. When death's dark night
Shall settle on his eyes, and the blithe day
Beams joy on him no more, hath not the shield
Spoken significant, and pictured borne
A boast against its bearer? I, to match
This Tydeus, will set forth the son of Astacus,
A noble youth not rich in boasts, who bows
Before the sacred throne of Modesty,
In base things cowardly, in high virtue bold.
His race from those whom Ares spared he draws,[25]
Born from the sown field of the dragon's teeth,
His name Melanippus. Mars shall throw the dice
Bravely for him, and Justice call him brother,
While girt he goes from his loved Theban mother
To ward the Argive spear.

STROPHE I.

Chorus. May the gods protect our champion!
Be the cause of Right his shield!
But I fear to see the breathless
Bleeding bodies of true warriors
Strewn upon the battle field.

Mess. Speed well your pious prayers! The lot hath placed
Proud Capaneus before the Electran gate,[26]
A giant warrior mightier than the first,
And boasting more than mortal. His high threats
May never Chance* fulfil! for with the aid
Of gods, or in the gods' despite, he vows
To sack the city, and sets the bolted wrath
Of Jove at nought, his lightnings and his thunders
Recking no more—so speaks the vauntful tongue—
Than vulgar noonday heat. His orbéd shield
The blazon of a naked man displays,
Shaking a flaring torch with lofty threat
In golden letters—I WILL BURN THE CITY.
Such is the man: who shall not quail before
A pride that flings defiance to the gods?

* CHANCE (Τύχη), it must be recollected, was a divine power among the ancients.

Eteocles. Here, too, we meet the strong with something stronger.
When men are proud beyond the mark of right,
They do proclaim with forward tongue their folly,
Themselves their own accuser. This brave Capaneus
With empty threats and wordy exercise,
Fights mortal 'gainst immortals, and upcasts
Loud billowy boasts in Jove's high face. But I
In Jove have faith that he will smite this boaster
With flaming bolts, to vulgar heat of noon
In no wise like. The gallant Polyphontus,
A man of glowing heart, against this blusterer
I'll send, himself a garrison to pledge
Our safety, by the grace of Artemis,
And the protecting gods. Name now the others.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Chorus. Perish, with his boasts, the boaster,
By strong thunder prostrate laid!
Never, never may I see him
Into holy homes of virgins
Rushing, with his godless blade!

Mess. Hear more. The third lot to Eteocles
Leapt from the upturned brazen helm,[27] and fixed him
At the Netaean gate.[28] His eager steeds,
Their frontlets tossed in the breeze, their swelling nostrils
High-snorting with the impatient blast of war,
Their bridles flapping with barbaric clang,
He curbs, and furious 'gainst the city wheels them,
Even as a whirling storm. His breadth of shield,
Superbly rounded, shows an armed man
Scaling a city, with this proud device,
NOT MARS HIMSELF SHALL HURL ME FROM THESE TOWERS.
Choose thou a champion worthy to oppose
This haughty chief, and pledge his country's weal.

Eteocles. Fear not: with happy omen, I will send,
Have sent already, one to meet this foe,
Whose boasts are deeds, brave Megareus, a son
Of the dragon's race, a warrior recking nothing
The snortings of impatient steeds. This man
Will, with his heart's blood, pay the nursing fee
Due to his Theban mother,* or come back—
Which grant the gods!—bearing on that proud shield

* See Note 60 to the Choephoræ.

Rich spoil to garnish forth his father's halls,
The painted champion, and the painted city,
And him that living bore the false-faced sign.
Now name the fourth, and spare me not your boasts.

STROPHE II.

Chorus. May the gods protect my champion!
Ruin seize the ruthless foe!
As they boast to raze the city,
So may Jove with wrathful vengeance
Lay their frenzied babblings low!

Mess. The fourth's Hippomedon. Before the gate
He stands of Onca Pallas, clamouring on
With lordly port. His shield's huge round he waved,
(Fearful to view), a halo not a shield.
No vulgar cunning did his hand possess
Who carved the dread device upon its face,
Typhon, forth-belching, from fire-breathing mouth,
Black smoke, the volumed sister of the flame;[29]
And round its hollow belly was embossed[30]
A ring of knotted snakes. Himself did rage,
Shouting for battle, by the god of war
Indwelt,[31] and, like a Maenad, his dark eyes
Look fear. Against this man be doubly armed,
For, where he is, grim Fear is with him.

Eteocles. Onca
Herself will guard the gate that bears her name,
From her own ramparts hurl the proud assailer,
And shield her nurslings from this crested snake.
Hyperbius, the right valiant son of Oenops,
Shall stand against this foe, casting his life
Into the chance of war; in lordly port,
In courage, in all the accoutrements of fight
Hippomedon's counterpart—a hostile pair
Well matched by Hermes.[32] But no equal match
Their shields display—two hostile gods—the one
Fire-breathing Typhon, father Jove the other,
Erect, firm-planted, in his flaming hand
Grasping red thunder, an unvanquished god.
Such are the gods beneath whose wing they fight,
For us the strong, for them the weaker power.
And as the gods are, so the men shall be
That on their aid depend. If Jove hath worsted

This Typhon in the fight, we too shall worst
Our adverse. Shall the king of gods not save
The man whose shield doth bear the SAVIOUR JOVE.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Chorus. Earth-born Typhon, hateful monster,
Sight that men and gods appals,
Whoso bears in godless blazon
Great Jove's foe, shall Jove almighty
Dash his head against the walls.

Messenger. So grant the gods! The fifth proud foe is stationed
Before the Borean gate, hard by the tomb
Of the Jove-born Amphion. By his spear
He swears, his spear more dear to him than gods,
Or light of day, that he will sack the city
In Jove's despite: thus speaks half-man, half-boy,
The fair-faced scion of a mountain mother.
The manly down, luxuriant, bushy, sprouts
Full from his blooming cheek: no virgin he
In aspect, though most virgin-like his name.*
Keen are his looks, and fierce his soul; he too
Comes not without a boast against the gates;
For on his shield, stout forgery of brass,
A broad circumference of sure defence,
He shows, in mockery of Cadméan Thebes,
The terrible Sphynx, in gory food delighting.
Hugely embossed, with terror brightly studded,
And in her mortal paw the monster rends
A Theban man: for which reproachful sign
Thick-showered the bearer bears the keenest darts,—
Parthenopæus, bold Arcadian chief.
No man seems he to shame the leagues he travelled
By petty war's detail. Not born an Argive,
In Argos nursed, he now her love repays,
By fighting 'gainst her foes. His threats—the god
Grant they be only threats!

Eteocles. Did they receive
What punishment their impious vaunts deserve,
Ruin with one wide swoop should swamp them all.
This braggart stripling, fresh from Arcady,
The brother of Hyperbius shall confront,
Actor, a man whose hand pursues its deed,

* The name PARTHENOPAUS, from παρθένος, a virgin, and ὤψ, the countenance.

Not brandishing vain boasts. No enemy,
Whose strength is in his tongue, shall sap these walls,
While Actor has a spear: nor shall the man
Who bears the hated portent on his shield
Enter our gate, but rather the grim sign
Frown on its bearer, when thick-rattling hail
Showered from our walls shall dint it. If the gods
Are just, the words I speak are prophecy.

STROPHE III.

Chorus. The eager cry doth rend my breast,
And on end stands every hair,
When I hear the godless vaunting
Of unholy men! May Até
Fang them in her hopeless snare!

Mess. The sixth a sober man, a seer of might,
Before the Homoloidian gate stands forth,[33]
And speaks harsh words against the might of Tydeus,
Rating him murderer, teacher of all ill
To Argos, troubler of the city's peace,
The Furies' herald, crimson slaughter's minion,
And councillor of folly to Adrastus.
Thy brother too, the might of Polynices,
He whips with keen reproaches, and upcasts
With bitter taunts his evil-omened name,
Making it spell his ugly sin that owns it.[34]
O fair and pious deed, even thus he cries,
To blot thy native soil with war, and lead
A foreign host against thy country's gods!
Soothly a worthy deed, a pleasant tale
For future years to tell! Most specious right,
To stop the sacred fountain up whence sprung
Thy traitor life! How canst thou hope to live
A ruler well acknowledged in the land,
That thou hast wounded with invading spear?
Myself this foreign soil, on which I tread,
Shall feed with prophet's blood. I hope to die,
Since die I must, an undishonoured death.
Thus spake the seer, and waved his full-orb'd shield
Of solid brass, but plain, without device.
Of substance studious, careless of the show,
The wise man is what fools but seem to be,[35]
Reaping rich harvest from the mellow soil

Of quiet thought, the mother of great deeds.
Choose thou a wise and virtuous man to meet
The wise and virtuous. Whoso fears the gods
Is fearful to oppose.

Eteocles. Alas! the fate
That mingles up the godless and the just
In one companionship! wise was the man
Who taught that evil converse is the worst
Of evils, that death's unblest fruit is reaped
By him who sows in Até's fields.* The man
Who, being godly, with ungodly men
And hot-brained sailors mounts the brittle bark,
He, when the god-detested crew goes down,
Shall with the guilty guiltless perish. When
One righteous man is common citizen
With godless and unhospitable men,
One god-sent scourge must smite the whole, one net
Snare bad and good. Even so, Oïcleus' son,
This sober, just, and good, and pious man,
This mighty prophet and soothsayer, he,
Leagued with the cause of bad and bold-mouthed men
In his own despite—so Jove hath willed—shall lead
Down to the distant city of the dead
The murky march with them. He will not even
Approach the walls, so I may justly judge.
No dastard soul is his, no wavering will;
But well he knows, if Loxias' words bear fruit,
(And, when he speaks not true, the god is dumb)
Amphiaraus dies by Theban spear.
Yet to oppose this man I will dispatch
The valiant Lasthenes, a Theban true,
Who wastes no love on strangers; swift his eye,
Nor slow his hand to make the eager spear
Leap from behind the shield. The gods be with him!

ANTISTROPHE III.

Chorus. May the gods our just entreaties
For the cause of Cadmus hear!
Jove! when the sharp spear approaches,
Sit enthroned upon our rampires,
Darting bolts, and darting fear!

* See Note 60 to Agamemnon.

Mess. Against the seventh gate the seventh chief
Leads on the foe, thy brother Polynices;
And fearful vows he makes, and fearful doom
His prayers invoke. Mounted upon our walls,
By herald's voice Thebes' rightful prince proclaimed,
Shouting loud hymns of capture, hand to hand
He vows to encounter thee, and either die
Himself in killing thee, or should he live
And spare thy recreant life, he will repay
Like deed with like, and thou in turn shalt know
Dishonouring exile. Thus he speaks and prays
The family gods, and all the gods of Thebes,
To aid his traitor suit. Upon his shield,
New-forged, and nicely fitted to the hand,
He bears this double blazonry—a woman
Leading with sober pace an armed man
All bossed in gold, and thus the superscription,
"I, JUSTICE, BRING THIS INJURED EXILE BACK,
TO CLAIM HIS PORTION IN HIS FATHER'S HALL."
Such are the strange inventions of the foe.
Choose thou a man that's fit to meet thy brother;
Nor blame thy servant: what he saw he says:
To helm the state through such rude storm be thine!

Eteocles. O god-detested! god-bemadded race![36]
Woe-worthy sons of woe-worn Oedipus!
Your father's curse is ripe! but tears are vain,
And weeping might but mother worser woe.
O Polynices! thy prophetic name
Speaks more than all the emblems of thy shield;
Soon shall we see if gold-bossed words can save thee,
Babbling vain madness in a proud device.
If Jove-born Justice, maid divine, might be
Of thoughts and deeds like thine participant,
Thou mightst have hope; but, Polynices, never,
Or when the darkness of the mother's womb
Thou first didst leave, or in thy nursling prime,
Or in thy bloom of youth, or in the gathering
Of beard on manhood's chin, hath Justice owned thee,
Or known thy name; and shall she know thee now
Thou leadst a stranger host against thy country?
Her nature were a mockery of her name
If she could fight for knaves, and still be Justice.
In this faith strong, this traitor I will meet

Myself: the cause is mine, and I will fight it.
For equal prince to prince, to brother brother,
Fell foe to foe, suits well. And now to arms!
Bring me my spear and shield, hauberk and greaves!
[*Exit* MESSENGER.

Chorus. Dear son of Oedipus! let not thy wrath
Wax hot as his whom thou dost chiefly chide!
Let the Cadméans with the Argives fight;
This is enough: their blood may be atoned.
But, when a brother falls by brother's hands,
Age may not mellow such dark due of guilt.

Eteocles. If thou canst bear an ill, and fear no shame,
Bear it: but if to bear is to be base,
Choose death, thy only refuge from disgrace.

STROPHE IV.

Chorus. Whither wouldst thou? calm thy bosom,
Tame the madness of thy blood;
Ere it bear a crimson blossom,
Pluck thy passion in the bud.

Eteocles. Fate urges on; the god will have it so.[37]
Now drift the race of Laius, with full sail,
Abhorred by Phœbus, down Cocytus' stream!

ANTISTROPHE IV.

Chorus. Let not ravening rage consume thee!
Bitter fruit thy wrath will bear;
Sate thy hunger with the thousands,
But of brother's blood beware!

Eteocles. The Curse must work its will: and thus it speaks,
Watching beside me with dry tearless eyes,
Death is thy only gain, and death to-day
Is better than to-morrow![38]

STROPHE V.

Chorus. Save thy life: the wise will praise thee;
To the gods with incense come,
And the storm-clad black Erinnys
Passes by thy holy home.

Eteocles. The gods will reck the curse, but not the prayers
Of Laius' race. Our doom is their delight.
'Tis now too late to fawn the Fate away.

ANTISTROPHE V.

Chorus. Nay! but yet thou mayst: the god,
That long hath raged, and burneth now,
With a gentler sway soft-wafted,
Soon may fan thy fevered brow.
Eteocles. The Curse must sway, my father's burning curse.
The visions of the night were true, that showed me
His heritage twin-portioned by the sword.
Chorus. We are but women: yet we pray thee hear us.
Eteocles. Speak things that may be, and I'll hear. Be brief.
Chorus. Fight not before the seventh gate, we pray thee.
Eteocles. My whetted will thy words may never blunt.
Chorus. Why rush on danger? Victory's sure without thee.
Eteocles. So speak to slaves; a soldier may not hear thee.
Chorus. But brother's blood—pluck not the bloody blossom.
Eteocles. If gods are just, he shall not 'scape from harm. [*Ex*

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

I fear the house-destroying power; I fear
The goddess most ungodlike,[39]
The all-truth-speaking seer
Of evil things, whose sleepless wrath doth nurse
Fulfilment of the frenzied father's curse.
The time doth darkly lower;
This strife of brother's blood with brother's blood
Spurs the dread hour.

ANTISTROPHE I.

O son of Scythia, must we ask thine aid?
Chalybian stranger thine,[40]
Here with the keen unsparing blade
To part our fair possessions? thou dost deal
A bitter lot, O savage-minded steel!
Much loss is all the gain,
When mighty lords with their stark corpses measure
Their whole domain.

STROPHE II.

When the slain shall slay the slayer,
And kindred blood with blood
Shall mingle, when the thirsty Theban soil
Drinks eager the black-clotting sanguine flood,

Who then shall purge the murderous stain,
Who wash it clean again?
When ancient guilt and new shall burst,
In one dire flood of woe?

ANTISTROPHE II.

With urgent pace the Fury treadeth,
To generations three
Avenging Laius' sin on Laius' race;
What time he sinned against the gods' decree,
When Phœbus from Earth's central shrine*
Thrice sent the word divine—
LIVE CHILDLESS, LAIUS, FOR THY SEED
SHALL WORK THY COUNTRY'S WOE.

STROPHE III.

But he to foolish words gave ear,
And ruin to himself begot,
The parricidal Oedipus, who joined
A frenzied bond in most unholy kind,
Sowing where he was sown; whence sprung a bud
Of bitterness and blood.

ANTISTROPHE III.

The city tosses to and fro,
Like a drifted ship; wave after wave,
Now high, now low, with triple-crested flow
Now reared sublime, brays round the plunging prow.
These walls are but a plank: if the kings fall
'Tis ruin to us all.

STROPHE IV.

The ancestral curse, the hoary doom is ripe.
Who now shall smooth such hate?
What hand shall stay, when it hath willed to strike,
The uplifted arm of Fate?
When the ship creaks beneath the straining gale,
The wealthy merchant † flings the well-stowed bale
Into the gulf below.‡

ANTISTROPHE IV.

When the enigma of the baleful Sphynx
By Oedipus was read,

* See Note 73 to the Choephoræ.
† See PAPE. *in voce* ἀλφηστής.
‡ Maritime similes are very common in Æschylus, and specially this.—Compare gamemnon, p. 70, Strophe II.

And the man-rending monster on a stone
Despairful dashed her head;
What mortal man by herd-possessing men,
What god by gods above was honoured then,
Like Oedipus below!

STROPHE V.

But when his soul was conscious, and he saw
The monstrous wedlock made 'gainst Nature's law,
Him struck dismay,
In wild deray,
He from their socket roots uptore
His eyes, more dear than children, worthy no more
To look upon the day.

ANTISTROPHE V.

And he, for sorry tendance wrathful,[41] flung
Curses against his sons with bitter tongue,
"THEY SHALL DISPUTE
A DIRE DISPUTE,
AND SHARE THEIR LAND WITH STEEL." I fear
The threatened harm; with boding heart I hear
The Fury's sleepless foot.

Re-enter MESSENGER.

Mess. Fear not, fair maids of Theban mothers nursed!
The city hath 'scaped the yoke; the insolent boasts
Of violent men hath fallen; the ship o' the state
Is safe; in sunshine calm we float; in vain
Hath wave on wave lashed our sure-jointed beams,
No leaky gap our close-lipped timbers knew,
Our champions with safety hedged us round,
Our towers stand firm. Six of the seven gates
Show all things prosperous; the seventh Phœbus
Chose for his own (for still in four and three
The god delights),[42] he led the seventh pair,
Crowning the doom of evil-counselled Laius.

Chorus. What sayst thou? What new ills to ancient Thebes

Mess. Two men are dead—by mutual slaughter slain.

Chorus. Who?—what?—my wit doth crack with apprehensio

Mess. Hear soberly: the sons of Oedipus—

Chorus. O wretched me! true prophet of true woe.

Mess. Too true. They lie stretched in the dust.

Chorus. Sayst so?
Sad tale! yet must I school mine ears to hear it.
Mess. Brother by brother's hand untimely slain.
Chorus. The impartial god smote equally the twain.
Mess. A wrathful god the luckless race destroys,
And I for plaints no less than pæans bring thee [43]
Plentiful food. The state now stands secure,
But the twin rulers, with hard-hammered steel,
Have sharply portioned all their heritage,
By the dire curse to sheer destruction hurried.
What land they sought they find it in the grave,
The hostile kings in one red woe are brothered;
The soil that called them lord hath drunk their blood.
[*Exit.*

Chorus. O Jove almighty! gods of Cadmus,
By whose keeping Thebes is strong,
Shall I sing a joyful pæan,
Thee the god full-throated hymning
That saved the state from instant harm?
Or shall drops of swelling pity
To a wail invert my ditty?
O wretched, hapless, childless princes!
Truly, truly was his name
Prophet of your mutual shame! *
Godless was the strife ye cherished,
And in godless strife ye perished!

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

The curse that rides on sable wing,
Hath done its part,
And horror, like a creeping thing,
Freezes my heart.
Their ghastly death in kindred blood
Doth pierce me thorough,
And deeply stirs the Thyad flood †
Of wail and sorrow.
An evil bird on boding wing
Did darkly sway,
When steel on steel did sternly ring
In strife to-day.

* Another pun on POLYNICES, see above, p. 278.
† *i.e.* Raging flood, *Thyad*, from θύω, to rage.

ANTISTROPHE I.

The voice that from the blind old king
With cursing came,
In rank fulfilment forth doth bring
Its fruit of shame.
O Laius, thou didst work our woe
With faithless heart;
Nor Phœbus with a half-dealt blow
Will now depart.
His word is sure, or pacing slow,
Or winged with speed,
And now the burthened cloud of woe,
Bursts black indeed.

[*The bodies of* ETEOCLES *and* POLYNICE
are brought on the stage.

EPODE.

Lo! where it comes the murky pomp,
No wandering voice, but clear, too clear
The visible body of our fear!
Twin-faced sorrow, twin-faced slaughter,
And twin-fated woe is here.
Ills on ills of monstrous birth
Rush on Laius' god-doom'd-hearth.

Sisters raise the shrill lament,
Let your lifted arms be oars!
Let your sighs be breezes lent,
Down the wailing stream to float
The black-sail'd Stygian boat;
Down to the home which all receiveth,
Down to the land which no man leaveth,
By Apollo's foot untrodden,
Sullen, silent, sunless shores!

But I see the fair Ismene,
And Antigone the fair,
Moving to this place of mourning,
Slow, a sorrow-guided pair.
We shall see a sight for weeping
(They obey a doleful hest)
Lovely maids deep-bosomed pouring
Wails from heavy-laden breast.
Chaunts of sorrow, dismal prelude

Of their grief, to us belong:
Let us hymn the dread Erinnys!
To the gloomy might of Hades,
Let us lift the sombre song.

Enter ANTIGONE *and* ISMENE *in sorrowful silence.*

Hapless sisters! maids more hapless
Ne'er were girded with a zone:
I weep, and wail, and mine, believe me,
Is a heart's sigh, no hireling moan.*

[*Here commences the Funeral Wail over the dead bodies of* ETEOCLES *and* POLYNICES *with mournful music.*

STROPHE I.

Semi-Chorus 1. Alas! alas! the hapless pair.
To friendly voice and warning Fate
They stopped the ear: and now too late
Dear bought with blood their father's wealth
In death they share.

Semi-Chorus 2. Outstretched in death, and prostrate low
Them and their house the iron Woe
Hath sternly crushed.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Semi-Chorus 1. Alas! alas! the old thrones reel,
The lofty palace topples down;
And Death hath won a bloody crown,
And thou sure end of strife hast made,
O keen cold steel!

Semi-Chorus 2. And, with fulfilment on her wing,
Curse-laden from the blind old king
The Fury rushed.

STROPHE II.

Semi-Chorus 1. Pierced through the left, with gaping gashes
Gory they lie.

Semi-Chorus 2. All gashed and gored, by fratricidal
Wounds they die.

Semi-Chorus 1. * * * *
* * *

Semi-Chorus 2. A god, a god doth rule the hour,
Slaughter meets slaughter, and the curse
Doth reign with power.

* See Note 67 to Agamemnon.

Semi-Chorus 1. See where the steel clean through hath cut
Their bleeding life,
Even to the marrow deep hath pierced
The ruthless knife.
Semi-Chorus 2. Deep in their silent hearts they cherished
The fateful curse,
And, with fell purpose sternly hating,
Defied remorse.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Semi-Chorus 1. From street to street shrill speeds the cry
Of wail and woe.
Semi-Chorus 2. And towers and peopled plains reply
With wail and woe.
Semi-Chorus 1. And all their wealth a stranger heir
Shall rightly share.
Semi-Chorus 2. The wealth that waked the deadly strife,
The strife that raged till rage and strife
Ceased with their life.
Semi-Chorus 1. With whetted heart, and whetted glaive,
They shared the lot;
Victor and vanquished each in the grave
Six feet hath got.
Semi-Chorus 2. A harsh allotment! who shall praise it,
Friend or foe?
Harsh strife in pride begun, and ending
In wail and woe.

STROPHE III.

Semi-Chorus 1. Sword-stricken here they lie, they lie
A breathless pair.
Semi-Chorus 2. Sword-stricken here they find, they find
What home, and where?
Semi-Chorus 1. A lonely home, a home of gloom
In their fathers' tomb.
Semi-Chorus 2. And wailing follows from the halls
The dismal bier;
Wailing and woe the heart-strings breaking,
And sorrow from its own self taking
The food it feeds on, moody sadness,
Shunning all sights and sounds of gladness,
And from the eye spontaneous bringing
No practised tear;

My heart within me wastes, beholding
This dismal bier.

ANTISTROPHE III.

Semi-Chorus 1. And on the bier we drop the tear
And justly say,
Semi-Chorus 2. To friend and foe, they purchased woe
And wail to-day.
Semi-Chorus 1. And to Hades showed full many the road
In the deadly fray.
Semi-Chorus 2. O ill-starred she!—there hath not been
Nor will be more,
Of sore-tried women children-bearing,
One like her, like sorrow sharing.
With her own body's fruit she joined
Wedlock in most unholy kind,
And to her son, twin sons the mother,
O monstrous! bore:
And here they lie, by brother brother
Now drenched in gore.

STROPHE IV.

Semi-Chorus 1. Ay, drenched in gore, in brothered gore,[44]
Weltering they lie;
Mad was the strife, and sharp the knife
That bade them die.
Semi-Chorus 2. The strife hath ceased: life's purple flood
The dry Earth drinks;
And kinsman's now to kinsman's blood
Keen slaughter links.
The far sea stranger forged i' the fire
The pointed iron soothed their ire.
A bitter soother! Mars hath made
A keen division
Of all their lands, and lent swift wing
To the curse that came from the blind old king
With harsh completion.

ANTISTROPHE IV.

Semi-Chorus 1. They strove for land, and did demand
An equal share;
In the ground deep, deep, where now they sleep,
There's land to spare.

Semi-Chorus 2. A goodly crop to you hath grown
Of woe and wailing;
Ye reaped the seed by Laius sown,
The god prevailing.
Shrill yelled the curse, a deathful shout,
And scattered sheer in hopeless rout
The kingly race did fall; and lo!
Fell Até planteth
Her trophy at the gate; and there
Triumphant o'er the princely pair
Her banner flaunteth.

[ANTIGONE *and* ISMENE *now come forward, and stand beside the dead bodies, pointing now to the one, and now to the other, finish the Wail as chief mourners*

PRELUDE.

Antig. Wounded, thou didst wound again.
Ismene. Thou didst slay, and yet wert slain.
Antig. Thou didst pierce him with the spear.
Ismene. Deadly-pierced thou liest here.
Antig. Sons of sorrow!
Ismene. Sons of pain!
Antig. Break out grief!
Ismene. Flow tears amain!
Antig. Weep the slayer.
Ismene. And the slain.

STROPHE.

Antig. Ah! my soul is mad with moaning.
Ismene. And my heart within is groaning.
Antig. O thrice-wretched, wretched brother!
Ismene. Thou more wretched than the other!
Antig. Thine own kindred pierced thee thorough.
Ismene. And thy kin was pierced by thee.
Antig. Sight of sadness!
Ismene. Tale of sorrow!
Antig. Deadly to say!
Ismene. Deadly to see!
Antig. We with you the sorrow bear.
Ismene. And twin woes twin sisters share.
Chorus. Alas! alas!
Moera, baneful gifts dispensing[45]
To the toilsome race of mortals,

Now prevails thy murky hour:
Shade of Oedipus thrice sacred,
Night-clad Fury, dread Erinnys,
Mighty, mighty is thy power!

ANTISTROPHE.

Antig. Food to feed the eyes with mourning,
Ismene. Exile sad, more sad returning!
Antig. Slain wert thou, when thou hadst slain
Ismene. Found wert thou and lost again.
Antig. Lost, in sooth, beyond reprieving.
Ismene. Life-bereft and life-bereaving.
Antig. Race of Laius, woe is thee!
Ismene. Woe, and wail, and misery!
Antig. Woe, woe, thy fatal name!
Ismene. Prophet of our triple shame.
Antig. Deadly to say!
Ismene. Deadly to see!
Chorus. Alas! alas!
Moera, baneful gifts dispensing
To the toilsome race of mortals,
Now prevails thy murky hour;
Shade of Oedipus thrice sacred,
Night-clad Fury, dread Erinnys,
Mighty, mighty is thy power.

EPODE.

Antig. Thou hast marched a distant road.
Ismene. Thou hast gone to the dark abode.
Antig. Cruel welcome met thee here.
Ismene. Falling by thy brother's spear.
Antig. Deadly to say!
Ismene. Deadly to see!
Antig. Woe and wailing.
Ismene. Wail and woe!
Antig. To my home and to my country.
Ismene. And to me much wail and woe.
Antig. Chief woe to me!
Ismene. Weeping and woe!
Antig. Alas! Eteocles, laid thus low!
Ismene. O thrice woe-worthy pair!
Antig. A god, a god, hath dealt the blow!
Ismene. Where shall they find their clay-cold lair?

Antig. An honoured place their bones shall keep.
Ismene. With their fathers they shall sleep.

Enter HERALD.

Herald. Hear ye my words—my herald's voice declaring
What seemed and seems good to the Theban senate.
Eteocles, his country's friend, shall find
Due burial in its friendly bosom.[46] He
Is free from sin against the gods of Cadmus,
And died, the champion of his country's cause,
As generous youths should die. Severer doom
Falls on his brother Polynices. He
Shall lie in the breeze unburied, food for dogs,
Most fit bestowal of a traitor's corpse;
For, had some god not stept between to save us,
And turned the spear aside, Cadméan Thebes
Had stood no more. His country's gods demand
Such stern atonement of the impious will
That led a hireling host against their shrines.
On him shall vultures banquet, ravening birds
His flesh shall tear; no pious hand shall pile
The fresh green mound, no wailing notes for him
Be lifted shrill, no tearful friends attend
His funeral march. Thus they who rule in Thebes
Have strictly ordered.

Antig. Go thou back, and give
This message to the rulers.—If none other
Will grant the just interment to my brother
Myself will bury him. The risk I reck not,
Nor blush to call rebellion's self a virtue,
Where I rebel, being kind to my own kin.
Our common source of life, a mother doomed
To matchless woes, nor less the father doomed,
Demand no vulgar reverence. I will share
Reproach with the reproached, and with my kin
Know kindred grief, the living with the dead.
For his dear flesh, no hollow-stomach'd wolves
Shall tear it—no! myself, though I'm but woman,
Will make his tomb, and do the sacred office.
Even in this bosom's linen folds, I'll bear
Enough of earth to cover him withal.
This thing I'll do. I will. For bold resolves
Still find bold hands; the purpose makes the plan.

Herald. When Thebes commands, 'tis duty to obey.
Antig. When ears are deaf, 'tis wisdom to be dumb.
Herald. Fierce is a people with young victory flushed.
Antig. Fierce let them be; he shall not go unburied.
Herald. What? wilt thou honour whom the city hates?
Antig. And did the gods not honour whom I honour?
Herald. Once: ere he led the spear against his country.
Antig. Evil entreatment he repaid with evil.
Herald. Should thousands suffer for the fault of one?
Antig. Strife is the last of gods to end her tale;
My brother I will bury. Make no more talk.
Herald. Be wilful, if thou wilt. I counsel wisdom.

Chorus. Mighty Furies that triumphant
Ride on ruin's baleful wings,
Crushed ye have and clean uprooted
This great race of Theban kings.
Who shall help me? Who shall give me,
Sure advice, and counsel clear?
Shall mine eyes freeze up their weeping?
Shall my feet refuse to follow
Thy loved remnant? but I fear
Much the rulers, and their mandate
Sternly sanctioned. Shall it be?
Him shall many mourners follow?
Thee, rejected by thy country,
Thee no voice of wailing nears,
All thy funeral march a sister
Weeping solitary tears?

[*The* CHORUS *now divides itself into two parts, of which one attaches itself to* ANTIGONE *and the corpse of* POLYNICES; *the other to* ISMENE *and the corpse of* ETEOCLES.

Semi-Chorus. Let them threaten, or not threaten,
We will drop the friendly tear,
With the pious-minded sister,
We will tend the brother's bier.
And though public law forbids
These tears, free-shed for public sorrow,
Laws oft will change, and in one state
What's right to-day is wrong to morrow.

Semi-Chorus. For us we'll follow, where the city
And the law of Cadmus leads us,

To the funeral of the brave.
By the aid of Jove Supernal,
And the gods that keep the city,
Mighty hath he been to save;
He hath smote the proud invader,
He hath rolled the ruin backward
Of the whelming Argive wave.

THE PERSIANS

A HISTORICAL CANTATA

"Why should calamity be full of words?
Windy attorneys to their client woes,
Airy succeeders of intestate joys,
Poor breathing orators of miseries!
Let them have scope; though what they do in part
Help nothing else, yet they do ease the heart."

SHAKESPERE.

Ὦ θείη Σαλαμὶς, ἀπολεῖς δὲ σὺ τέκνα γυναικῶν.

DELPHIC ORACLE.

PERSONS

CHORUS OF PERSIAN ELDERS.
ATOSSA, Mother of Xerxes.
MESSENGER.
SHADE OF DARIUS, Father of Xerxes.
XERXES, King of Persia.

SCENE—*Before the Palace at Susa. Tomb of Darius in the background*

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

THE piece, on the perusal of which the reader is now about to enter, stands unique among the extant remains of the ancient drama, as drawing its materials from the historical, not the mythological, age of the Greek people. We are not, from this fact, to conclude that the Greeks, or the ancients generally, drew a more strict boundary line between the provinces of history and poetry, than the moderns. Such an inference were the very reverse of the fact, as the whole style of ancient history on the one hand, and the examples of Ennius and Lucan in poetry, sufficiently show. Not even within the special domain of the Greek stage is our one extant example the only historical drama of which the records of Hellenic literature have preserved the memory; on the contrary, one of the old arguments of the present play expressly testifies that Phrynichus, a contemporary of Æschylus, had written a play on the same subject; and we know, from other sources, that the same dramatist had exhibited on the stage, with the most powerful effect, the capture of the city of Miletus, which took place only a few years before the battle of Marathon.* There was a plain reason, however, why, with all this, historical subjects should, in the general case, have been excluded from the range of the Greek dramatic poetry; and that reason was, the religious character which, as we have previously shown, belonged so essentially to the tragic exhibitions of the Hellenes. That religious character necessarily directed the eye of the tragic poet to those ages in the history of his country, when the gods held more familiar and open converse with men, and to those exploits which were performed by Jove-descended heroes in olden time, under the express sanction, and with the special inspiration, of Heaven. Had a characteristically Christian drama arisen, at an early period, out of the festal celebrations of the Church, the sacred poets of such a drama would, in the same way, have confined themselves to strictly scriptural themes, or to themes belonging to the earlier and more venerable traditions of the Church.

* The play of Phrynichus, which celebrated the defeat of Xerxes, was called *Phœnissæ*, from the Phœnician virgins who composed the chorus. How far Æschylus may have borrowed from this work is now impossible to know. Nothing certainly can be gained by pressing curiously the word παραπεποιῆσθαι in the mouth of an old grammarian.

With regard to the subject of the present drama, there can be
doubt that, like the fall of Napoleon at Moscow, Leipzig, a
Waterloo, in these latter days, so in ancient history there is no ev
more suited for the purposes of poetry than the expedition of Xer
into Greece. There is "a beginning, a middle, and an end," in t
story, which might satisfy the critical demands of the stern
Aristotle; a moral also, than which no sermon ever preached fr
Greek stage or Christian pulpit is better calculated to tame
foolish pride, and to purify the turbid passions of humanity.
ancient and modern times, accordingly, from Chœrilus to Glov
the whole, or part of this subject has been treated, as its importa
seemed to demand, epically;* but of all the poetical glorifications
this high theme, that of Æschylus has alone succeeded in asserti
for itself a permanent niche in the library of that select poetry wh
belongs to all times and all places.

Of the battle of Salamis and the expedition of Xerxes, as
historical event, it must be unnecessary for me to say a single wo
here, entitled, as I am, to presume that no reader of the plays
Æschylus can be ignorant of the main facts, and the tremendo
moral significance of that event. I shall only mention, for the sa
of those whose memory is not well exercised in chronology, th
it took place in the autumn of the year 480 before Christ, ten ye
after the battle of Marathon, thirty years after the expulsion of t
Tarquins from Rome, and eighty years after the foundation of t
great Persian empire by Cyrus the great. Those who wish to re
the descriptions of the poet with complete interest and satisfacti
should peruse the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st chapters (Vol. V.),
Mr. GROTE'S great work; and, if possible, also, the 7th and 8
books of Herodotus.†

On the poetical merit of the Persians, as a work of art, a gre
authority, Schlegel, has pronounced that it is "undoubtedly the mo
imperfect of all the extant tragedies of this poet;" but, unless t
historical theme be the stumbling-block, I really cannot see on wh
ground this judgment proceeds. As for the descriptive parts, th
battle of Salamis, and the retreat of the routed monarch, are pictur
with a vividness and a power to which nothing in this massive an
manly author is superior; the interest to the reader being increase
tenfold by the fact, that he is here dealing with a real event of th
most important character, and recited by one of the best qualifie

* Chœrilus was a Samian, contemporary of Herodotus, but younger. His poe
entitled περσικά, included the expedition of Darius as well as that of Xerxes.

† By the praiseworthy exertions of Mr. Bohn, the English reader is now supplied wi
translations of this, and other Classical writers, at a very cheap rate.

of eye-witnesses. The moral of the piece, as already stated, is, in every respect, what in a great drama or epos could be desired; and, with respect to the lyrics, the Anapæstic march, and the choral chaunt in Ionic measure, with which it opens, has about it a breadth, a magnificence, and a solemnity surpassed only in the choral hymns of the Agamemnon. Not less effective, to an ancient audience, I am sure, must have been the grand antiphonal chaunt with which (as in The Seven against Thebes) the variously repeated wail of this tragedy is brought to a climax; and if the Bishop of London, and some other scholars, have thought this sad exhibition of national lamentation ridiculous, we ought to believe that these critics have forgot the difference between a modern reader and an ancient spectator, rather than that so great a master as Æschylus did not know how to distinguish between a tragedy and a farce.

In common with other historical poems, the Persians of Æschylus is not altogether free from the fault of bringing our imaginative faculty into collision with our understanding, by a partial suppression or exaggeration of historical truth. In the way of suppression, the most noticable thing is, that the slave of Themistocles, who is described as having, by a false report to Xerxes, brought on the battle of Salamis, appears, according to the poet, to have cheated the Persians only; whereas, according to the real story, he cheated his countrymen also, and forced them to fight in that place against the will of the non-Athenian members of the confederation. In the way of exaggeration, again, GROTE, in an able note,* has shown what appear to me valid reasons for disbelieving the fact of the freezing of the Strymon, and its sudden thaw, described so piteously by our poet; while the very nature of the case plainly shows that the whole circumstances of the retreat, coming to us through Greek reporters, were very liable to exaggeration. This, however, in a poetical description, is a small matter. What appears to me much worse, and, indeed, the weakest point in the structure of the whole drama, is that the contrast between the character and conduct of Darius and that of his son is drawn in colours much too strong; the fact being that the son, in following the advice of Mardonius to attack Athens, was only carrying into execution the design of the father, and making use of his preparations.† All that I have to say in defence of this misrepresentation is, that the poet wrote with a glowing patriotic heat what we now contemplate with a cold historical criticism. The greatest works of the greatest masters can, as

* Vol. V. p. 191. THIRLWALL had defended the statement of Æschylus.
† Herodotus VII. 1–4.

human nature is constituted, seldom be altogether free from i
consistencies of this kind.

I have only further to add, that I have carefully read wh
WELCKER and GRUPPE* have written on the supposed ideal co
nection between the four pieces of the tetralogy, among which th
Persians stands second, in the extant Greek argument;† but tha
while I admire exceedingly the learning and ingenuity of thes
writers, I doubt much the utility of attempting to restore the palac
of ancient art out of those few loose bricks which Time has spare
us from the once compact mass. Poetry may be benefited by suc
speculations; Philology, I rather fear, has been injured.

* Trilogie, p. 470; Ariadne, p. 81.

† These plays were PHINEUS, the PERSIANS, GLAUCUS, and PROMETHEUS. The la
was a satiric piece, having no connection with the Prometheus Bound, or the trilogy
which it belonged.

THE PERSIANS

CHORUS, *entering the Orchestra in procession. March time.*

We are the Persian watchmen old,
The guardians true of the palace of gold,
Left to defend the Asian land,
When the army marched to Hellas' strand;
Elders chosen by Xerxes the king,
The son of Darius, to hold the reins,
Till he the conquering host shall bring
Back to Susa's sunny plains.
But the spirit within me is troubled and tossed,
When I think of the King and the Persian host;
And my soul, dark-stirred with the prophet's mood,
Bodes nothing good.
For the strength of the Asian land went forth,
And my heart cries out for the young king's worth
That marshalled them on to the war:*
Nor herald, nor horseman, nor wandering fame,
Since then to the towers of the Persian came.
From Susa and from Ecbatana far,
And from the Cissian fortress old,†
Strong in the ordered ranks of war
Forth they went, the warriors bold;
Horseman and footman and seaman went,
A vast and various armament.
Amistres, Artaphrenes, led the van,
Megabátes, Astaspes, obeyed the ban;
Persian leaders, kings from afar
Followed the great King's call to the war.
Forth they went with arrow and bow,[1]
And in clattering turms with chivalrous show;
To the eye of the dastard a terrible sight,
And with constancy mailed for the fight.
Artembáres in steeds delighting,
Imaeus the foe with the sure arrow smiting,
Pharandáces, Masistres, Sosthánes in war

* See LINWOOD—*voce* βαΐζω.

† "The people of Susa are also called Cissians."—STRABO, p. 728.

Who lashes the steed, and drives the car.
The mighty and many-nurturing Nile
Sent forth many a swarthy file;
Susiscánes and Egypt's son
Pegastágon lead them on.
Arsámes the mighty, whose word commands
The strength of the sacred Memphian bands,
And Ariomardus brave, whose sway
The sons of Ogygian* Thebes obey.
And the countless host with sturdy oar
That plough the lagoons of the slimy shore.†
And the Lydians march in luxurious pride,
And the tribes of the continent far and wide
Whom Arcteus and valiant Metragathes lead,
Kings that serve the great King's need;
And the men who fight from the sharp-scythed car,
Whom golden Sardes[2] sends to the war;
Some with two yoke, some with three,
A terrible sight to see.
And the sons of sacred Tmolus appear‡
On free-necked Hellas to lay the yoke,
Mardon and Tharybis, stiff to the spear
As the anvil is stiff to the hammer's stroke.
And the men of Mysia skilful to throw
The well-poised dart,[3] and they who ride
On wide Ocean's swelling tide,
A mingled people with motley show
From golden Babylon, men who know
To point the arrow and bend the bow.
The Asian tribes that wear the sword[4]
From far and near
The summons hear,
And follow the hest of their mighty Lord.
All the flower of the Persian youth hath gone,
And the land that nursed them is left alone
To pine with love's delay;
And wives and mothers from day to day,
Fearing what birth
The time shall bring forth,
Fret the long-drawn hours away.

* See p. 172, Note.

† "They who dwell in the marshes are the most warlike of the Egyptians."—Thucy. I. 110. ABRESCH.

‡ "Tmolus, a hill overhanging Sardes, from which the famous golden-flooded Pactol flows."—STRABO, p. 625. "Called sacred from Bacchus worshipped there."—Euri. Bacch. 65. PAL.

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

Proudly the kingly host,
City-destroying, crossed
Hence to the neighbouring
Contrary coast;
Paving the sea with planks,
Marched he his serried ranks.
Hellè's swift-rushing stream,*
Binding with cord and chain,
Forging a yoke
For the neck of the main.

ANTISTROPHE I.

King of a countless host,
Asia's warlike boast,
Shepherd of many sheep,[5]
Conquering crossed.
Trusting to men of might,
Footman and harnessed knight;
Son of a golden race,
Strong both by land and sea,
Equal to gods,
Though a mortal was he.

STROPHE II.

His eyes like the dragon's dire
Flashing with dark blue fire,†
See him appear!
Through the long lines of war
Driving the Syrian car,‡
Ares in arrows strong
Leading against the strong
Men of the spear!

ANTISTROPHE II.

When wave upon wave of men
Breaks through each Grecian glen,
Whelming the land,

* The Hellespont; so called from Helle, the daughter of Athamas, a character famous in the Argonautic legend.

† "As a dragon in a hollow fiercely waiteth for a man,
Eating venomed herbs, and darkly nursing anger in his breast,
Glaring with fierce looks of terror, as he winds him in his den."
ILIAD.

‡ "They who are called by the Greeks SYRIANS, are called ASSYRIANS by the Barbarians."—HERODOT. VII. 63.

War like wild Ocean's tide,
What arm shall turn aside?
Persia's stout-hearted race,
Hand to hand, face to face,
Who shall withstand?

MESODE.

But, when the gods deceive,[6]
Wiles which immortals weave
Who shall beware?
Who, when their nets surround,
Breaks with a nimble bound
Out of the snare?
First they approach with smiles
Wreathing their hidden wiles:
Then with surprise,
Seize they their prey; and lo!
Writhing in toils of woe
Tangled he lies.

STROPHE III.

Fate hath decreed it so,
Peace, peace, is not for thee!
Persia, hear and know,
War is the lot for thee!
Spake the supernal powers,
Charging of steeds shall be,
Taking of towns and towers,
Persia, to thee!

ANTISTROPHE III.

Where the sea, hoar with wrath,
Roars to the roaring blast,
Daring a doubtful path,
Persian hosts have passed;
Where wave on wave cresting on
Bristles with angry breath,
Cable and plank alone
Part them from death!

STROPHE IV.

Therefore is my soul within me
Murky-mantled, pricked with fear:
Alas! the Persian army! Never

May such cry invade my ear!
Susa, emptied of her children,
Desolate and drear!

ANTISTROPHE IV.

Never may the Cissian fortress
With such echo split the air;
Spare mine ears the shrieks of women,
And mine eyes the sad sight spare,
When fair hands the costly linen
From gentle bosoms tear!

STROPHE V.

For all our horse with frequent tramp,
And our footmen from the camp,
Even as bees on busy wing,
Swarmed out with the king:
And they paved their briny way,
Where beats the many-mingling spray
The bridge that joins the Thracian strand
To Asian land.*

ANTISTROPHE V.

Wives bedew with many a tear
The couches where the partner dear
Hath been, and is not; Persian wives
Fret with desire their lives.
Far, far, he roams from land to land,
Her restless lord with lance in hand;
She in unmated grief to moan
Is left alone.

But come, ye Persian elders all,
Let us seat us beside this ancient hall;
Wise counsel to-day let us honestly frame,
Touching the fate of the kingly one,
Race of our race, and name of our name,
Darius' godlike son:
For much it concerns us to know
Whether the winged shaft shot from the bow,
Or the strength of the pointed spear hath won.
But lo! where she comes, a moving light,

* The bridge of boats built by Xerxes. The original ἀμφίζευκτον ἁλιον πρῶνα μφοτέρας κοινὸν ἀιας seems intelligible no other way. So Blom., Pal., and Buck., nd Linw.—Compare Note 34 to the Eumenides.

Like the eyes of the god so bright,
The mother of Xerxes, my queen.
Let us fall down before her with humble prostration,[7]
And greet her to-day with a fair salutation,
The mother of Xerxes, my queen.
[*To* Atossa, *entering.*] Mistress of the low-zoned wome
queen of Persia's daughters, hail!
Aged mother of King Xerxes, wife of great Darius, hail!
Spouse of him who was a god, and of a present god t
mother,
If the ancient bliss that crowned it hath not left the Persi
host.

Enter Atossa, *drawn with royal pomp in a chariot.*

Atossa. Even this hath moved me, leaving these proud gold
garnished halls,
And the common sleeping chamber of Darius and myself
Here to come. Sharp fear within me pricks my heart
will declare
All the thoughts that deep perplex me to my friends; t
secret fear
Lest our pride of ramping riches kick our sober weal in t
dust,
Scattering wide what wealth Darius gathered, not withou
god.
Twofold apprehension moves me, when I ponder this
truth;
Without men much riches profit little; without wealth t
state,
Though in numbers much abounding, may not look on j
ous light.
Riches are a thing not evil; but I tremble for the eye,
And the eye I call the presence of the master in the hous
Ye have heard my sorrows; make me sharer of your coun
now,
In what matter I shall tell you, ancient, trusty Persian me
For with you my whole of wisdom, all my healthy couns
dwell.

Chorus. Mistress of this land, believe it, never shalt thou as
kindness,
Be it word from us or action, twice, while power shall aid
will;
We are willing to advise thee in this matter, what we ma

* See Note 63 to the Choephoræ.

Atossa. Since when my son departed with the army,
To bring destruction on Ionia,* scarcely
One night hath been that did not bring me dreams;
But yesternight, with figurement most clear,
I dreamt; hear thou the theme. Methought I saw
Two women richly dight, in Persian robes
The one, the other in a Dorian dress,
Both tall above the vulgar stature, both
Of beauty blameless, and descended both
From the same race. The one on Hellas dwelt,
The other on fair Asia's continent.
Between these twain some strife there seemed to rise;
Which when my son beheld, forthwith he seized them,
And joined them to his car, and made their necks
Submissive to the yoke. The one uptowered
In pride of harness, as rejoiced to follow
The kingly rein. The other kicked and plunged,
And tossed the gear away, and broke the traces,
The yoke in sunder snapt, and from the car
Ran reinless. On the ground my son was thrown,
And to his aid Darius pitying came,
Whom when he saw, my Xerxes rent his robes.
Such was my vision of the night; the morn
Brought a new portent with it. When I rose,
And dipped my hands in the fair-flowing fount,[8]
And to the altar of the averting gods,
To whom such right pertains, with sacred cake
In sacrificial ministry advanced,
I saw an eagle flying to the altar[9]
Of Phœbus; there all mute with fear I stood;
And after it in swiftest flight I saw
A hawk that darted on the eagle's head,
And tore it with his claws, the royal bird
Yielding his glory meekly to be plucked.
These things I saw in fear, as ye in fear
Must hear them. Ye know well, my son commands
Supreme in Persia. Should success attend him,
'Tis well; but should mischance o'ertake him, he
Will rule in Susa as he ruled before;
No power is here to whom he owes account.

Chorus. We advise thee, mother, neither with the feeble words of fear,

* Attica.

Nor with boastful courage. Turn thee to the gods in su
plication:
Theirs it is to ward fulfilment of all evil-omened sights,
Bringing good to full fruition for thyself and for thy childre
For the city and all that love thee. Then a pure libati
pour
To the Earth and to the Manes; with especial honor pra
The dread Shade of thy Darius whom thou sawest in t
night,
To send blessings on thy Xerxes in the gladness of the d
Keeping back unblissful sorrows in the sightless gloom
death.
Thus my soul its own diviner* with a friendly kind conce
Counsels. Doubtless time will perfect happy fates for th
and thine.

Atossa. Truly, with a friendly reading thou hast read my m
night dreams,
Words of strengthening solace speaking to my son and to
house.
May the gods all blessing perfect. I to them, as thou h
said,
And the Shades, the well-beloved, will perform befitt
rites,
In the palace; meanwhile tell me this, for I would gla
know
Where, O friends, is famous Athens on the broad face of
Earth?[10]

Chorus. Far in the west: beside the setting of the lord of li
the sun.

Atossa. This same Athens, my son Xerxes longed with mu
desire to take.

Chorus. Wisely: for all Greece submissive, when this city fa
will fall.

Atossa. Are they many? do they number men enough to m
my son?

Chorus. What they number was sufficient once to work
Medes much harm.

Atossa. Other strength than numbers have they? wealth enou
within themselves?

Chorus. They can boast a fount of silver, native treasure to
land. †

* *θυμόμαντις.*—See Note 67 to Agamemnon.

† The mines of Laurium, near the Sunian promontory. On their importance t
Athenians during this great struggle with Persia, see GROTE, V. p. 71.

Atossa. Are they bowmen good? sure-feathered do their pointed arrows fly?

Chorus. Not so. Stable spears they carry, massy armature of shields.

Atossa. Who is shepherd of this people? lord of the Athenian host?

Chorus. Slaves are they to no man living, subject to no earthly name.[11]

Atossa. How can such repel the onset of a strong united host?

Chorus. *How* Darius knew in Hellas, when he lost vast armies there.

Atossa. Things of deep concern thou speakest to all mothers in this land.

Chorus. Thou shalt know anon exactly more than I can guess, for lo!

Here comes one—a hasty runner—he should be a Persian man.

News, I wis, this herald bringeth of deep import, good or bad.

Enter MESSENGER.

Mess. O towns and cities of wide Asia,
O Persian land, wide harbour of much wealth,
How hath one stroke laid all thy grandeur low,
One frost nipt all thy bloom! Woe's me that I
Should be first bearer of bad news! but strong
Necessity commands to speak the truth.
Persians, the whole barbaric host hath perished.

STROPHE I.

Chorus. O misery! misery, dark and deep!
Dole and sorrow and woe!
Weep, ye Persians! wail and weep,
For wounds that freshly flow!

Mess. All, all is ruined: not a remnant left.
Myself, against all hope, see Persia's sun.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Chorus. O long, too long, through creeping years
Hath the life of the old man lasted,
To see—and nurse his griefs with tears—
The hopes of Persia blasted!

Mess. I speak no hearsay: what these eyes beheld
Of blackest evil, Persians, I declare.

STROPHE II.

Chorus. Ah me! all in vain against Hellas divine
Were the twanging bow and whizzing reed,
All vainly mustered the thickly clustered
Armies of the Mede!

Mess. The shores of Salamis, and all around
With the thick bodies of our dead are peopled.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Chorus. Alas! the wreck of the countless host!
The sundered planks, and the drifted dead,[12]
Rocked to and fro, with the ebb and the flow
On a wavy-wandering bed!

Mess. Vain were our shafts; our mighty multitude
Vanished before their brazen-beaked attack.

STROPHE III.

Chorus. Sing ye, sing ye a sorrowful song,
Lift ye, lift ye a piercing cry!
Our harnessed throng and armies strong
Lost and ruined utterly!

Mess. O hated name to hear, sad Salamis!
O Athens, I remember thee with groans.

ANTISTROPHE III.

Chorus. O Athens, Athens, thou hast reft us
Of our all we did possess!
Sonless mothers thou hast left us,
Weeping wives and husbandless!

Atossa. Thou see'st I have kept silence: this sad stroke
Hath struck me dumb, as powerless to give voice
To my own sorrows, as to ask another's.
Yet when the gods send trouble, mortal men
Must learn to bear it. Therefore be thou calm;
Unfold the perfect volume of our woes,
And, though the memory grieve thee, let us hear
Thy tale to the end; what loss demands our tears,
Which of the baton-bearing chiefs* hath left
An army to march home without a head.

Mess. Xerxes yet lives, and looks on the light.

Atossa. Much light
In this to me, and to my house thou speakest,
A shining day from out a pitchy night.

* ἐπι σκηπτουχίᾳ ταχθεὶς. So the σκηπτουχοι βασιλεῖς of Homer.

Mess. Artembares, captain of ten thousand horse,
Upon the rough Silenian shores * lies dead,
And Dadaces, the chiliarch, spear-struck fell
Precipitate from his ship—an easy leap;
And noble Tenagon, a pure Bactrian born,
Around the sea-lashed isle of Ajax floats.
Lilaeus, Arsames, Argestes, these
The waves have made their battering ram, to beat
The hard rocks of the turtle-nurturing isle.
Pharnuchus, Pheresseues, and Adeues,
And Arcteus from their native Nile-spring far
Fell from one ship into one grave. Matallus,
The Chrysian myriontarch, who led to Hellas
Full thrice ten thousand sable cavalry,
His thick and bushy beard's long tawny pride
Hath dyed in purple gore. The Magian Arabus
The Bactrian Artames on the self-same shore
Have found no cushioned lodgment.† There Amestris,[18]
And there Amphistreus, wielder of the spear,
And there Metragathes lies, for whom the Sardians
Weep well-earned tears; and Sersames, the Mysian.
With them, of five times fifty ships commander,
Lyrnaean Tharybis, a goodly man,
Lies hopeless stretched on the unfriendly strand.
Syennesis, the brave Cilician chief
Who singly wrought more trouble to the foe
Than thousands, died with a brave man's report.
These names I tell thee of the chiefs that fell,
A few selecting out of many losses.

Atossa. Alas! alas! more than enough I hear;
Shame to the Persians and shrill wails. But say,
Retracing thy discourse, what was the number
Of the Greek ships that dared with Persia's fleet
To engage, and grapple beak to beak.

Mess. If number
Of ships might gain the fight, believe me, queen,
The victory had been ours. The Greeks could tell
But ten times thirty ships, with other ten,
Of most select equipment. Xerxes numbered
A thousand ships, two hundred sail and seven
Of rapid wing beside. Of this be assured,

* Part of the shore of Salamis, called τροπάια ἄκρα.—Schol.
† σκληρᾶς μέτοικος γῆς: inest amara ironia.—Blom.

What might of man could do was done to save us;
Some god hath ruined us, not weighing justly
An equal measure. Pallas saves her city.[14]

Atossa. The city? is it safe? does Athens stand?

Mess. It stands without the fence of walls. Men wall it

Atossa. But say, who first commenced the fight—the Greeks
Or, in his numbers strong, my kingly son.

Mess. Some evil god, or an avenging spirit,*
Began the fray. From the Athenian fleet
There came a Greek,[15] and thus thy son bespoke.
"Soon as the gloom of night shall fall, the Greeks
No more will wait, but, rushing to their oars,
Each man will seek his safety where he may,
By secret flight." This Xerxes heard, but knew not
The guile of Greece, nor yet the jealous gods,
And to his captains straightway gave command
That, when the sun withdrew his burning beams,
And darkness filled the temple of the sky,[16]
In triple lines their ships they should dispose,
Each wave-plashed outlet guarding, fencing round
The isle of Ajax surely. Should the Greeks
Deceive this guard, or with their ships escape
In secret flight, each captain with his head
Should pay for his remissness. These commands
With lofty heart, thy son gave forth, nor thought
What harm the gods were weaving. They obeyed.
Each man prepared his supper, and the sailors
Bound the lithe oar to its familiar block.
Then, when the sun his shining glory paled,
And night swooped down, each master of the oar,
Each marshaller of arms, embarked; and then
Line called on line to take its ordered place.
All night they cruised, and, with a moving belt,
Prisoned the frith, till day 'gan peep, and still
No stealthy Greek the expected flight essayed.
But when at length the snowy-steeded Day
Burst o'er the main, all beautiful to see,
First from the Greeks a tuneful shout uprose,
Well-omened, and, with replication loud,
Leapt the blithe echo from the rocky shore.
Fear seized the Persian host, no longer tricked
By vain opinion; not like wavering flight

* αλάστωρ.

Billowed the solemn pæan of the Greeks,
But like the shout of men to battle urging,
With lusty cheer. Then the fierce trumpet's voice
Blazed* o'er the main; and on the salt sea flood
Forthwith the oars, with measured plash, descended,
And all their lines, with dexterous speed displayed,
Stood with opposing front. The right wing first,
Then the whole fleet bore down, and straight uprose
A mighty shout. "SONS OF THE GREEKS, ADVANCE!
YOUR COUNTRY FREE, YOUR CHILDREN FREE, YOUR WIVES!
THE ALTARS OF YOUR NATIVE GODS DELIVER,
AND YOUR ANCESTRAL TOMBS—ALL'S NOW AT STAKE!"
A like salute from our whole line back-rolled
In Persian speech. Nor more delay, but straight
Trireme on trireme, brazen beak on beak
Dashed furious. A Greek ship led on the attack,†
And from the prow of a Phœnician struck
The figure-head; and now the grapple closed
Of each ship with his adverse desperate.
At first the main line of the Persian fleet
Stood the harsh shock; but soon their multitude
Became their ruin; in the narrow frith
They might not use their strength, and, jammed together,
Their ships with brazen beaks did bite each other,
And shattered their own oars. Meanwhile the Greeks
Stroke after stroke dealt dexterous all around,
Till our ships showed their keels, and the blue sea
Was seen no more, with multitude of ships
And corpses covered. All the shores were strewn,
And the rough rocks, with dead; till, in the end,
Each ship in the barbaric host, that yet
Had oars, in most disordered flight rowed off.
As men that fish for tunnies, so the Greeks,
With broken booms, and fragments of the wreck,
Struck our snared men, and hacked them, that the sea,
With wail and moaning, was possessed around,
Till black-eyed Night shot darkness o'er the fray.‡
These ills thou hearest: to rehearse the whole,
Ten days were few; but this, my queen, believe,
No day yet shone on Earth whose brightness looked
On such a tale of death.

* ἐπέφλεγεν.

† The captain of this ship was Ameinias, brother of Æschylus.—See GROTE, V. 178.

‡ A bold expression, but used also by Euripides.—νυκτὸς δμμα λυγάιας—(Iphig. aur., 110). To Polytheists such terms were the most natural things in language.

Atossa. A sea of woes
On Persia bursts, and all the Persian name!
Mess. Thou hast not heard the half: another woe
Remains, that twice outweighs what I have told.
Atossa. What worse than this? Say what mischance so stro
To hurt us more, being already ruined?
Mess. The bloom of all the Persian youth, in spirit
The bravest, and in birth the noblest, princes
In whom thy son placed his especial trust,
All by a most inglorious doom have perished.
Atossa. O wretched me, that I should live to hear it!
But by what death did Persia's princes die?
Mess. There is an islet, fronting Salamis,
To ships unfriendly, of dance-loving Pan[17]
The chosen haunt, and near the Attic coast.
Here Xerxes placed his chiefest men, that when
The routed Greeks should seek this strand, our troops
Might both aid friends, where friends their aid required,
And kill the scattered Greeks, an easy prey;
Ill-auguring what should hap! for when the gods
Gave to the Greeks the glory of the day,*
Straightway well-cased in mail from their triremes
They leapt, rushed on the isle, and hedged it round,
That neither right nor left our men might turn,
But fell in heaps, some struck by rattling stones,
Some pierced by arrows from the twanging bow.
Then, in one onslaught fiercely massed, the Greeks
Our fenceless chiefs in slashing butchery
Mowed down, till not one breath remained to groan.
But Xerxes groaned: for from a height that rose
From the sea-shore conspicuous,† with clear view
He mustered the black fortune of the fight.
His stole he rent, and lifting a shrill wail
Gave the poor remnant of his host command
To flee; and fled with them. Lament with me,
This second sorrrow heaped upon the first.
Atossa. O dismal god! how has thy hate deceived
The mind of the Mede! A bitter vengeance truly
Hath famous Athens wreaked on my poor son,

* "As soon as the Persian fleet was put to flight, Aristides arrived with some G hoplites at the island of Psyttaleia, overpowered the enemy, and put them to death man."—GROTE.

† "Having caused the land force to be drawn up along the shore opposite to Sal Xerxes had erected for himself a lofty seat or throne upon one of the projecting de ties of Mount Aegaleos, near the Heracloion, immediately overhanging the sea."—G

To all the dead that fell at Marathon
Adding this slaughter!—O my son! my son!
Thyself hast paid the penalty that thou
Went to inflict on others!—But let me hear
Where hast thou left the few ships that escaped?

Mess. The remnant of the fleet with full sail sped
Swift in disordered flight from Salamis.
The wreck of the army through Bœotia trailed
Its sickly line: there some of thirst fell dead
Even in the water's view; some with fatigue
Panting toiled on through Phocian land, and Doris,
And passed the Melian gulf, where through the plain
Spercheius rolls his fructifying flood.
Then faint and famished the Achaean land
Received us, and fair Thessaly's city; there
The most of hunger died and thirst; for with
This double plague we struggled. Next Magnesia
And Macedonian ground we traversed; then
The stream of Axius, reedy Bolbe's mere,
The Edonian fields, and the Pangaean hills.
But here some god* stirred winter premature,
And in the night froze Strymon's holy stream.
Then men who never worshipped gods before
Called on the heavens and on the Earth to save them,
With many prayers, in vain. A few escaped,
What few had crossed the ice-compacted flood
Ere the strong god of light shot forth his rays.
For soon the lustrous orb of day shone out
With blazing beams, unbound the stream, and oped
Inevitable fate beneath them: then
Man upon man in crowded ruin fell,
And he was happiest who the soonest died.
We who survived, a miserable wreck,
Struggled through Thrace slowly with much hard toil,[18]
And stand again on Persian ground, and see
Our native hearths. Much cause the city has
To weep the loss of her selectest youth.
These words are true: much I omit to tell
Of all the woes a god hath smote withal
Our Persian land.

Chorus. O sorely-vexing god,
How hast thou trampled 'neath no gentle foot
The Persian race!

* *θεὸς* indefinitely; a common way of talking in Homer.

Atossa. Woe's me! the army's lost.
O dreamy shapes night wandering, too clearly
Your prophecy spoke truth! But you, good Seniors,
Sorry expounders though ye be, in one thing
I will obey. I will go pray the gods,
As ye advised; then gifts I will present
To Earth and to the Manes. I will offer,
The sacred cake to appease them. For the past,
'Tis past beyond all change; but hope may be
To make the gods propitious for the future.
Meanwhile your counsel in this need I crave;
A faithful man is mighty in mischance.
My son, if he shall come ere I return,
Cheer him with friendly words, and see him safe,
Lest to this ill some worser woe be added. [*Ex*

Chorus. O Jove, king Jove destroyed hast thou
Our high-vaunting countless hosts!
Our high-vaunting countless hosts
Where be they now?
Susa's glory, Ecbatana's pride,
In murky sorrow thou didst hide,
And with delicate hands the virgins fair
Their white veils tear,
And salt streams flow from bright fountains of woe,
And rain on the bosoms of snow.
They whose love was fresh and young,
Where are now their husbands strong?
The soft delights of the nuptial bed
With purple spread,
Where, where be they?
They have lost the joy of their jocund years,
And they weep with insatiate tears:
And I will reply with my heart's strong cry,
And lift the doleful lay.

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

Asia from each furthest corner
Weeps her woes, a sonless mourner;
Xerxes a wild chase pursuing,
Xerxes led thee to thy ruin;
Xerxes, luckless fancies wooing,
Trimmed vain fleets for thy undoing.

Not like him the old Darius
Shattered thus from Hellas came;
Rightly he is honoured by us,
Susa's bowman without blame.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Dark-prowed ships that plough wide ocean
With well-poised wings through waves' commotion,
Ships, the countless crews that carried,
In briny death ye saw them buried,
Where the Ionian beaks were dashing,
Where the Persian booms were crashing!
And our monarch scarcely scaping,
Left with life the deathful fray,
Through the plains of Thracia shaping
Sad his bleak and wintry way.

STROPHE II.

But the firstlings of our losses
The Ionian billow tosses,
And Cychréan waves are hurried,
O'er the stranded dead unburied.
Let the sharp grief bite thy marrow,
With thy wailing smite the sky!
Freely voice thy heaving sorrow,
With a weighty burden cry!

ANTISTROPHE II.

Woe's me! by the wild waves driven,
By the mute sea-monsters riven,[19]
The untainted ocean's creatures
Battening on their traceless features!
Heirless homes are lorn and lonely,
Childless parents weep and wail,
Old men weep; with weeping only
They receive the woeful tale.

STROPHE III.

Ah me! even now while we are mourning
Some rebel hearts belike are spurning
The Persian rule; some serf refuses
The gold due to his master's uses.
And some are slow with reverence low
To kiss the ground and adore,
For the power that long was fresh and strong
Is found no more.

ANTISTROPHE III.

The tongues of men, free from wise reining,
Will now break forth with loud complaining;
Unmuzzled now, unyoked, the rabble
Will blaze abroad licentious babble.
For the blood-drenched soil of the sea-swept isle
Its prey restoreth never.
And the thing that hath been henceforth shall be see
No more for ever.

Enter ATOSSA.

Atossa. Good friends, whoso hath knowledge of mishap,
Knows this, that men, when swelling ills surge o'er them
Brood o'er the harm till all things catch the hue
Of apprehension; but, when Fortune's stream
Runs smooth, the same, with confidence elate,
Hope the boon god will blow fair breezes ever.
Thus to my soul all things are full of fear,
The adverse gods from all sides strike my eye,
And in my ear, with ominous-ringing peal,
Fate prophesies. Such terror scares my wits.
No royal car to-day, no queenly pomp
Is mine; the broidered stole would ill become
My present mission, bringing as thou see'st,
These simple offerings to appease the Shades;
From the chaste cow, this white and healthful milk,
This clearest juice, by the flower-working bee
Distilled, this pure wave from the virgin spring,
This draught of joyaunce from the unmingled grape,
Of a wild mother born; this fragrant fruit
Of the pale green olive, ever leafy-fair,[20]
And these wreathed flowers, of all-producing Earth
Fair children. But, my dear lov'd friends, I pray you,
With pious supplication, now invoke,
The god Darius[21] while on the earth I pour
These pure libations to the honour'd dead.

Chorus. O queen, much-revered of the Persian nation,
To the chambers below pour thou the libation,
While we shall uplift the holy hymn,
That the gods who reign in the regions dim,
May graciously hear when we pray.
O holy powers that darkly sway
In the subterranean night,

O Earth, and Hermes, and thou who art king
Of the Shades that float on bodiless wing,
Send, O send him back to the light!
For, if remedy be to our burden of woes,
He surely knows.

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

And dost thou hear me, blessed Shade, imploring
Thy aid divine, and freely pouring
Of plaintive grief
The various flow?
I will cry out, till Persia's godlike chief
Shall hear below.

ANTISTROPHE I.

O Earth, and ye that rule the shadowy homes,
Send from your sunless domes
The mighty god
Of Susan birth,
Than whom no greater yet was pressed by the sod
Of Persian earth.

STROPHE II.

O dear-loved man! dear tomb! and dearer dust
That in thee lies!
O Aïdóneus, thy charge release,[22]
O stern Aïdóneus, and, in peace,
Let king Darius rise!

ANTISTROPHE II.

He was a king no myriads vast he lost
In wars inglorious.
Persia, a counsellor was he,
A counsellor of god to thee,
He with his hosts victorious.

STROPHE III.

Come, dread lord![23] Appear! Appear!
O'er the sepulchre's topmost tier;
The disc of thy regal tiara showing,[24]
With thy sandals saffron-glowing,
Come, good father Darius, come!

ANTISTROPHE III.

Fresh and unstaunched woes to hear,
Lord of a mighty lord appear!
For the clouds of Stygian night o'ercome us,
And all our youth are perished from us,
Come, good father Darius, come!

EPODE.

O woe! and woe! and yet again
Woe, and misery, and pain!
Why should'st thou die, and leave the land
Thou master of the mighty hand?
Why should thy son with foolish venture
Shake thy sure Empire to its centre?[25]
And why must we deplore
The countless triremes on the sea-swept shore
Triremes no more?[26]

The Shade of DARIUS *rises from the Tomb.*

Darius. O faithfullest of my faithful friends, compeers
Of my fair youth, elders of Persia, say
With what sore labour labours now the state?
Pierced is the Earth, and rent with sounds of woe!
And I my spouse beholding near the tomb
Am troubled, and her offerings I receive
Propitious. Ye with her this cry have raised
Of shrill lament to bring the dead from Hades,
No easy climb; the gods beneath the ground
Are readier to receive than to dismiss;*
But I was lord above them. I am come
To meet your questioning. Ask, while yet the time
Chides not my stay. What ill weighs Persia down?

STROPHE

Chorus. I cannot speak before thee;
I tremble to behold thee;
The ancient awe subdues me.

Darius. Not to hold a long discourse, but swift to grant a reply,
I have left the homes of Hades, by your wailings d moved.
What thou hast to ask me, therefore ask, and throw al aside.

* Facilis descensus Averni, etc.—VIRGIL, Æneid VI.

ANTISTROPHE.

Chorus. I tremble to obey thee.
Such sorrows to unfold thee,
My powerless lips refuse me.

Darius. Since the ancient reverence holds thee, and enchains thy mind, to thee
I will speak, the aged partner of my bed, my high-born spouse.
Cease thy weepings and thy wailings; tell me what mischance hath hapt.
'Tis most human that mischances come to mortal man, not few
Woes by seas, not few by land, if the Fates prolong his span.

Atossa. O all men in bliss surpassing while thine eyes beheld the day,
Of all Persians envied, living like a god on earth, no less
Happy wert thou in thy dying, ere thou didst behold the depth
Of this present woe, Darius. Thou, in short phrase shalt hear all.
Persia's strength is gone: the army lost: all ruined. I have said.

Darius. How? Did pestilence smite the city, or did foul sedition rise?

Atossa. Neither. Near far Athens routed was the Persian host.

Darius. Who marched?
Which of my children marched the host to Athens?

Atossa. Thy impetuous son
Xerxes. Xerxes of her children drained wide Asia's plains.

Darius. On foot,
Or with triremes did he risk this foolish venture?

Atossa. With two fronts,
One by sea, by land the other.

Darius. But so vast an army how?

Atossa. With rare bonds of wood and iron, Helle's streaming frith they crossed.

Darius. Wood and iron! Could these fetter billowy Bosphorus in his flow?

Atossa. So it was. Some god had lent him wit to plan his own perdition.

Darius. Alas! a mighty god full surely robbed him of his sober mind.

Atossa. And the fruit of his great folly we behold in matchl
woes.

Darius. I have heard your wailings: tell me more exact t
dismal chance.

Atossa. First the whole sea host being ruined brought like ru
on the foot.

Darius. By the hostile spear of Hellas they have perished o
and all?

Atossa. Ay. The citadel of Susa, emptied of her childr
moans.

Darius. Alas! the faithful army!

Atossa. All the flower of Bactria's youth are sla

Darius. Woe, my hapless son! What myriads of our faith
friends he ruined!

Atossa. Xerxes, stripped of all his glory, with a straggling f
they say—

Darius. What of him? Speak! Speak! I pray thee; is th
safety, is there hope?

Atossa. Fainly comes, with life scarce rescued, to the brid
that links the lands.

Darius. And has crossed to Asia?

Atossa. Even so, most surely, ran the ne

Darius. Ah! on wings how swift the issue of the ancient do
hath sped!

Thee, my son, great Jove hath smitten. Long-drawn ye
I hoped would roll,

Ere fulfilment of the dread prophetic burden should
known.

But when man to run is eager, swift is the god to a
a spur.[27]

Opened flows a fount of sorrow to ourselves and to
friends.

This my son knew not: he acted with green youth's p
sumptuous daring,

Weening Helle's sacred current, Bosphorus' flood divine
bind

Like a slave with hammered fetters, damming its unc
quered tide,

Forcing passage against Nature for a host unwisely great

Being mortal with immortals, with Poseidon's power
dared

To contend fool-hardy. Did not strong distemper hold
soul

Of my hapless son? The riches stored by me with mickle care
Now, I fear, will be the booty of the swiftest-seizing hand.
Atossa. Converse with the sons of folly taught thy eager son to err,[28]
Thou wert great they said, and mighty, winning riches with thy spear,
He, unmanly, chamber-fighting, adding nothing to thy store.
With these taunts the ears assailing of thy warlike son, bad men
Planned at length the march to Hellas—planned his ruin and our woe.
Darius. And, doing this, my son hath done a deed
Whose heavy memory shall not die. For never
Fell such mischance on Susa's halls, since when
Jove gave his honor that one sceptre sways
Sheep-pasturing Asia. First the Mede was King
Of the vast host of people.[29] Him his son
Succeeded, ending well things well begun;
For wisdom still was rudder to his valour.
Cyrus, the third from him, a prosperous man,
Brought peace to all his friends. The Lydian people,
The Phrygians, the Ionians, he subdued:
With him no god was wroth; for he was wise.
The fourth was Cyrus' son: he was a leader
Of mighty hosts. Him, the fifth, Mardus followed,
A blot to Persia, and the ancestral throne;
Whom in the palace slew Artaphrenes,
Sworn, with a chosen band of faithful friends,
To give him secret riddance. Maraphis next,
And seventh Artaphrenes: myself
Then won the lot I coveted. I marched
My hosts to many wars, but never brought
Mishap like this on Susa. My son, Xerxes,
Being young hath young conceits; and takes no note
Of my advisement. Ye, who were my friends,
And fellows in the government, can witness,
We suffered loss, but we preserved the state.
Chorus. Liege lord Darius, to what issue tend
Thy words? With greedy ears we wait to hear
How Persia henceforth may her strength repair.
Darius. Learn from your loss, and never march your armies
Again to Hellas, were they twice as strong.
Not man alone, the land fights for the foe.

Chorus. How mean'st thou this? how fights the land them?

Darius. Our mighty multitudes their barren coast
Kills by sheer famine.

Chorus. But with a moderate host?

Darius. A moderate host remains; but, of that few,
Few shall see Persian land.

Chorus. How? Shall the army
Not all from Europe cross by Helle's frith?

Darius. Few out of many; if the prophecies,
That are in part fulfilled by what we see,
(And the gods lie not) speak the future true.
It is an empty hope that bids him leave
A select force behind him: they remain,
Where with fat streams Asopus feeds the plain,
Themselves to feed it fatter: in Bœotia
Much woe awaits them justly, the fair price
Of their own godless pride, that did not fear
When first they entered Greece, to rob the altars
Of the eternal gods, to fire their temples,
Uproot the old foundations of their shrines,
And from their basements in commingled wreck
Dash down the images. Much harm they worked,
And much shall suffer. From no shallow bed
Their woes shall flow, but like a spring gush forth,
Still fresh enforced. With such gore-streaming death
The Dorian spear shall daub Plataea's soil;
And the piled dead to generations three
Speak this mute wisdom to the thoughtful eye—
PROUD THOUGHTS WERE NEVER MADE FOR MORTAL M
A haughty spirit* blossoming bears a crop
Of woe, and reaps a harvest of despair.
Look on these things, pride's just avengement; think
On Athens and on Hellas; fear to slight
The present bounty of the gods, lest they
Rob you of much, while greed still gapes for more.
Jove is chastiser of high-vaunting thoughts,
And heavily falls his judgment on the proud;
Therefore, my foolish son, when he shall come,
With friendly warnings teach, that he may cease
From rash imaginings that offend the gods.
And thou, his aged mother, go within,

* ὕβρις—See Note 61 to Agamemnon, and Note 41 Eumenides.

And bring a seemly robe with thee, to meet
Thy son withal: for thou shalt see him soon,
His broidered vestments torn in many a shred,
Grief's blazonry. Thou only with kind words
Canst soothe his sorrow, deaf to all beside.
But now I go hence to the gloom below.
Ye aged friends, farewell. Though ills surround,
Yet give your souls to joyaunce, while ye may,
For riches profit nothing to the dead.

[*The Shade of* DARIUS *descends.*

Chorus. O many woes, both present and to come,
On the barbaric race I weep to hear!

Atossa. O god, how many sorrows hast thou sent
To weigh me down: but this doth gnaw my heart,
That I should live to see my kingly son
Come in grief's tattered weeds to Susa's halls;
But I will go and bring a seemly robe
To meet him, if I may. I will not leave
My dear-loved son unsolaced in his woe.

[*Exit into the palace.*

CHORAL HYMN.

STROPHE I.

O glorious and great was the Persian land!
To the cities of Susa that owned his command
How blest was the day!
Defeat came not nigh us when good old Darius
With invincible, godlike, victorious hand
Held fortunate sway.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Sure-fenced were his cities with law, and no fear
The Persian knew when his armies were near;
They came from the fight,
Not weary and worn, and of glory shorn,
But trophied with spoils, and with costliest gear
All proudly bedight.

STROPHE II.

What cities of splendour
To him did surrender,
Though he crossed not the border that Halys prescribes
To the Median tribes!
From Susa far
Thrace feared his war,

And the islanded cities of Strymon the river
Cowered at the clang of his sounding quiver.

ANTISTROPHE II.

And cities of power,
Girt with wall and with tower,
Far inland away from the frith and the bay,
Rejoiced in his sway;
The proud roofs that gleam
O'er Helle's broad stream,
That fringe Propontis' bosomed shores,
And where the mouth of hoarse Pontus roars.

STROPHE III.

And the sea-swept isles that like sentinels stand
Breasting the ports of the Asian land,
Lesbos and Chios, with bright wine glowing,
And Samos, where groves of green olive are growing,
Myconos, Paros, and Naxos together,
Studding the main like brother with brother,
And Andros that neighbourly lies in the sea,
Tenos to thee.

ANTISTROPHE III.

And Lemnos that looks with a doubtful face
Half to Asia, half to Thrace,
And where Daedalean Icarus fell,
And Rhodes and Cnidos of him can tell,
And the cities of Cyprus great and small,
Paphos and Soli obeyed his call,
And the mother whose name the daughter borrows,
That caused our sorrows.*

EPODE.

And the towns of the Greeks, well peopled and wealthy
He swayed with counsels wise and healthy;
And the mustered strength of the East stood by us,
A harnessed array,
Many-mingled were they,
Made one at the call of the mighty Darius.
But now the tide hath turned indeed,
The gods have worked our woe,
By the spear, and the glaive,
And the fierce-lashing wave
Low lies the might of the Mede!

* Salamis in Cyprus, from which the Grecian Salamis was a colony.

Enter XERXES.

Xerxes. Ah wretched me! even so, even so;
Suddenly, suddenly came the blow,
And strong was the rod of the merciless god
That struck the Persian low!
Ah me! Ah me!
My knees beneath me shake, to see
These seniors reverend and grey,
Gathered to meet me on such a day.
O would that I had been fated to die
With the brave where destiny found them,
When they stained with gore the stranger's shore,
And the darkness of death came round them!

Chorus. O king of the goodly army, for thee
We weep, and the princes that went with thee,
Of Persian nobles the glory and crown,
Whom a god with his scythe mowed down!
For the halls of Hades, dark and wide,
Xerxes hath plenished with Persia's pride,
And the land laments her sons.
Hundreds have trodden the path of gloom,
Thousands of Asia's choicest bloom;
Tens of thousands, that wielded the bow,
Are gone to the chambers of death below.
Ah me! ah me! these strong-limbed men,
Where be they now that were lusty then?
All Asia mourns, O King, with thee,
And bends the feeble knee.

Here commences, with mournful Oriental music, and with violent gesticulations, a great National Wail over the misfortunes of the Persian people.

STROPHE I.

Xerxes. I am the man! I am the man!
The father of shame! the fount of disgrace!
Weep me! weep me! once a king,
Now to my country an evil thing,
A curse to my race!

Chorus. To meet thy returning,
A voice of deep mourning,
A tune evil-aboding,
A cry spirit-goading,

Of a Maryandine wailer,[30]
Thou shalt hear, thou shalt hear,
O King, with many a tear!

ANTISTROPHE I.

Xerxes. Lift ye, lift ye, the piercing cry!
Tune ye, tune ye, the doleful lay!
For the ancient god of the Persian race,
That bless'd our fathers, hath turned his face
From Xerxes away!
Chorus. A cry spirit-piercing,
The dark tale rehearsing,
Of ocean red-heaving,
The slaughtered receiving,
The cry of a city that wails for her children
Thou shalt hear, thou shalt hear,
O King, with many a tear!

STROPHE II.

Xerxes. Ares was strong on the side of the foe,
The Ionian foe!
Bristling with ships he worked our woe.
His scythe did mow,
The sea, the land,
And laid us low
On the dismal strand.
Leader of Chorus.[31] Lift, O lift, the earnest cry!
Ask, and he will make reply.
Chorus. Where is all thy troop of friends,
That marched with thee away, away?
Where is the might of Pharandaces,
Susas and Pelagon, where be they?
Where is Datamas, where Agdabatus,
Psammis, and Susiscánes, say?
All that marched from Ecbatana's halls,
Where be they? where be they?

ANTISTROPHE II.

Xerxes. From a Tyrian ship they leapt on shore,
To leap no more.
On the shore of Salamis drenched in gore,
The stony shore,
They made their bed,
To rise no more,
The dead! the dead!

Leader of Chorus. Lift, O lift the earnest cry,
Ask, and he will make reply!

Chorus. Ah! say, where is Pharnúchus, where?
Cariomardus, where is he?
Where the chief Seualces, where
Aelæus of noble degree?
Memphis, Tharybis, and Masistris,
Hystæchmas, and Artembares, say?
All the brave that journeyed to Hellas,
Where be they? where be they?

STROPHE III.

Xerxes. Ah me! ah me!
They looked on Ogygian Athens,* and straight
With one fell swoop down came the Fate,
And we left them there with gasp and groan,
On the shore of the stranger strewn.

Chorus. Didst thou leave him there to lie,
Batanóchus' son, thy faithful eye? †
Him didst thou leave on Salamis' shores
Who counted thy thousands by tens and by scores?
The strong Oebáres and Parthus, were they
Left to be lashed by the hostile spray?
The Persian princes—woe! woe! woe!
Hast thou left to the flood and the foe?

ANTISTROPHE III.

Xerxes. Ah me! ah me!
Balefully, balefully with sharp sorrow,
Thou dost pierce my inmost marrow;
My heart, my heart cries out to hear thee
Name the lost friends I loved so dearly!

Chorus. One other name compels my grief,
Xanthus, of Mardian men the chief;
Ancháres the warlike, and lords of the steed
Diaexis, Arsáces that ride with speed?
Lythimnas, Kygdabatas, where be they,
And Tolmos eager for the fray?
Not, I wis, where they wont to be,
Behind the tented car with thee.

STROPHE IV.

Xerxes. They are gone, the generals, gone for ever!

* See p. 172, and compare p. 271.
† See Note 63 to the Choephoræ.

Chorus. Lost, and to be heard of never!
Xerxes. Woe worth the day
Chorus. Ye gods! on a public place of woe
Ye set us high;
And Até on the sorrowful show
Doth feast her eye.

ANTISTROPHE IV.

Xerxes. We are stricken, beyond redemption stricken!
Chorus. Stricken of Heaven! with vengeance stricken!
Xerxes. And sore dismay!
Chorus. On an evil day we joined the fray,
With the brave Greek name;
From Ionian ships a sheer eclipse
On Persia came.

STROPHE V.

Xerxes. With such an army, struck so dire a blow!
Chorus. So great a power, the Persian power, laid low!
Xerxes. These rags, the rest of all my state, behold!
Chorus. Ay! we behold.
Xerxes. This arrow-case thou see'st, this quiver alone—
Chorus. What say'st thou? this alone?
Xerxes. This arrow-case my all.
Chorus. From store how great, remnant how small!
Xerxes. With no friends near, abandoned sheer.
Chorus. The Ionian people shrinks not from the spear.

ANTISTROPHE V.

Xerxes. They face it well. I saw the deadly fight.
Chorus. The sea-encounter saw'st thou, and the flight?
Xerxes. Ay! and beholding it I tore my stole.
Chorus. O dole! O dole!
Xerxes. More dolorous than dole! and worse than worst!
Chorus. O doubly, trebly curst!
Xerxes. To us annoy, to Athens joy!
Chorus. Our sinews lamed, our vigour maimed!
Xerxes. Unministered and unattended!
Chorus. Alas! thy friends on Salamis were stranded!

STROPHE VI.

Xerxes. Weep, and while the salt tears flow,
To the palace let us go!
Chorus. We weep, and, while the salt tears flow,
To the palace with thee go.

Xerxes. Ring the peal both loud and shrill!
Chorus. An ill addition is ill to ill.
Xerxes. Swell the echo!—high and higher
Lift the wail to my desire!
Chorus. With echoing sorrow, high and higher,
We lift the wail to thy desire.
Xerxes. Heavy came the blow, and stunning.
Chorus. From my eyes the tears are running.

ANTISTROPHE VI.

Xerxes. Lift thine arms and sink them low,
Oaring with the oars of woe![32]
Chorus. Our arms we lift, dark woes deploring,
With the oars of sorrow oaring.
Xerxes. Ring the peal both loud and shrill!
Chorus. Grief to grief, and ill to ill.
Xerxes. With shrill melody, high and higher,
Lift the wail to my desire!
Chorus. With thrilling melody, high and higher,
We lift the wail to thy desire.
Xerxes. Mingle, mingle sigh with sigh!
Chorus. Wail for wail, and cry for cry.

STROPHE VII.

Xerxes. Beat your breasts; let sorrow surge,
Like a Mysian wailer's dirge!
Chorus. Even as a dirge; a Mysian dirge.
Xerxes. From thy chin the honor tear,
Pluck thy beard of snowy hair!*
Chorus. We tear, we tear, the snowy hair.
Xerxes. Lift again the thrilling strain!
Chorus. Again, again, ascends the strain.

ANTISTROPHE VII.

Xerxes. From thy breast the white robe tear,
Make thy wounded bosom bare!
Chorus. The purfled linen, lo! I tear.
Xerxes. Pluck the honor from thy head,
Weep in baldness for the dead!
Chorus. I pluck my locks, and weep the dead.
Xerxes. Weep, weep! till thine eyes be dim!
Chorus. With streaming woe, they swim, they swim.

* See Ezra ix. 3.

EPODE.

Xerxes. Ring the peal both loud and shrill!
Chorus. Grief to grief, and ill to ill!
Xerxes. Go to the palace: go in sadness!
Chorus. I tread the ground sure not with gladness.
Xerxes. Let sorrow echo through the city!
Chorus. From street to street the wailing ditty.
Xerxes. Sons of Susa, with delicate feet,[33]
Gently, gently tread the street!
Chorus. Gently we tread the grief-sown soil.
Xerxes. The ships, the ships by Ajax isle,
The triremes worked our ruin sheer.
Chorus. Go. Thy convoy be a tear. [*Exeu*

NOTES TO THE PLAYS

NOTES TO THE AGAMEMNON

Note 1 (p. 43). "High on the Atridan's battlements."

DUNBAR, SEWELL, and CONNINGTON plead strongly for translating *ἄγκαθεν* here as in Eumen. v. 80, thus—

"As I lie propped on my arm
Upon the Atridan housetop, like a dog."

But this idea has always appeared to be more like the curious conceit of an ingenious philologist, than the natural conception of a great poet. Supposing the original reading to have been *ἀνέκαθεν*, the mere accidental lengthening of the leg of the *ν* by a hurried transcriber, would give the word the appearance of *γ* to a careless scrutinizer; and that this blunder was actually made the metre proves in Eumen. 361, in which passage, whatever SEW. may ingeniously force into it, the meaning *from above* is that which is most in harmony with the context. Besides, in such matters, I am conservative enough to have a certain respect for tradition.

Note 2 (p. 43). "The masculine-minded who is sovereign here."

"*ἀνδρόβουλον* seems to be used here ambiguously, and to be the first hint of lurking mischief. The gradual development of the coming evil from these casual hints is one of the chief dramatic beauties of the Agamemnon." —SEW.

Note 3 (p. 43). ". . . and lift high-voiced
The jubilant shout."

I have strongly rendered the strong term, *ἐπορθιάζειν*, which would necessarily suggest to the Greek the high-keyed notes of the *νόμος ὄρθιος* mentioned by Herod I. 22, as sung by Arion to the sailors. I think, however, it is going beyond the mark to say, with SYMMONS, "With loud acclaim, and Orthian minstrelsy," retaining the word *ὄρθιος*, which is only suggested, not expressed in the text, and printing it with a capital letter, as if it were a sort of music as distinct as the Mysian and Maryandine wailing, mentioned in the Persians. Thus, *ὀρθίον κωκυμάτων φωνή*, in Soph. Antigone, 1206, means nothing but the voice of shrill wails, or, as DONALDSON well translates the whole passage,

"The voice of lamentation treble-toned,
Peals from the porch of that unhallowed cell."

Note 4 (p. 43). "Thrice six falls to me."

That is, the highest throw in the dice. "The dice (*tessera*, *κύβοι*), in games of chance among the ancients, were numbered on all the six sides, like the dice now in use; and three were used in playing. Hence arose the proverb, *ἢ τρὶς ἓξ ἢ τρεῖς κύβοι*, *either three sixes or three aces*, all or none." —Dr. SMITH'S Antiq. Dict. *voce* TESSERA.

Note 5 (p. 43). "Is laid a seal."

Literally, *a huge ox hath gone*, an expression supposed to be derived from the figure of an ox, as the symbol of wealth, expressed on an old coin; in

which case, to put the ox on a man's tongue, would be equivalent to tippin it with silver, that is to say, giving money with injunction of secrecy. Afte the expression became proverbial, it might be used generally to expres secrecy without any idea of bribery, which, as CON. remarks, is quit foreign to this place, and therefore FRANZ is wrong to translate "*m verschliesst ein golden Schloss den Mund.*" I follow here, however HUMBOLDT and SYM. in not introducing the ox into the text, as it is apt t appear ludicrous; and, besides, the origin of the expression seems onl conjectural.

Note 6 (p. 44). "Sceptred kings by Jove's high grace."

Διόθεν. "ἐκ δε Διός βασιλῆες," says the theogony. Homer also con siders the kingly office as having a divine sanction, and Agamemnon o Earth represents Jupiter in Heaven.—ILIAD I. 279; II. 197. And ther can be no doubt that the highest authority in a commonwealth, whethe regal or democratic, has a divine sanction, so long as it is exercised withi its own bounds, and according to the laws of natural justice.

Note 7 (p. 44). "O'er the lone paths fitful-wheeling."

I have endeavoured to combine both the meanings of ἐκπατιόις which hav any poetical value; that of SYM. *lonely*, and that of KLAUSEN, *wanderin* and therefore excessive, which CON. well gives "*with a wandering grief.*" The same beautiful image is used by Shelley in his Adonais.

Note 8 (p. 44). ". . . The late-chastising Fury."

That the divine vengeance for evil deeds comes not immediately, bu slowly, at a predestined season, is a doctrine as true in Christian theolog as it is familiar to the Heathen dramatists. Therefore, Tiresias, in th Antigone, prophesies to Creon that "the avenging spirits of Hades and o Heaven, storing up mischief for a future day (ὑστεροφθόροι), would punis him for his crimes. But when the sword of Olympian justice is once drawn then the execution of the divine judgment comes swiftly and by a short way and no mortal can stay it." As the same Sophocles says—

συντέμνουσι γὰρ
Θεῶν ποδώκεις τὸυς κακὸφρονας βλάβαι.
ANTIG. V. 1104.

Note 9 (p. 44). ". . . Jove, the high protector
Of the hospitable laws."

As he is the supreme ruler of the physical, so Jove has a providentia supervision of the moral world, and in this capacity is the special punishe of those who sin (where human laws are weak to reach), by treachery o ingratitude, as was the case with Paris. This function of the Helleni Supreme Deity is often piously recognized by Homer, as in Odys. XIV 283—

"But he feared the wrath of Jove, lord of the hospitable board,
Jove who looks from Heaven in anger on the evil deeds of men."

Note 10 (p. 44). "The powers whose altars know no fire."

ἀπύρων ἱερῶν, "fireless holy things." By "fireless" is here meant so far as I can see, not to be propitiated by fire, persons to whom al sacrificial appeals are vain. Whether the Fates or the Furies are mean there are no means of ascertaining; for both agree with the tone of feeling

d with the context; and as they are, in fact, fundamentally the same, powers that always act in unison (Eumen. 165 and 949), the reader need t much care. It is possible, however, that the whole passage may bear e translation of "powers wroth for fireless altars," *i.e.* neglected sacri-es.—So HUMB. and FR. Nor are we bound to explain what sacrifices, by whom neglected; for omission of religious rites, known or unknown, as a cause, always at hand, with the ancients, to explain any outpouring divine wrath. BUCKLEY, following BAMBERGER and DINDORF, con-lers that the sacrifice of Iphigenia is alluded to; which is also probable ough. No commentary can make clear what the poet has purposely left rk.

Note. 11 (p. 45). "The oil that knows no malice."

We see in this passage the religious significancy, as it were, of the oil ed in their sacred rites by the ancients; and we may further remark, with ew., that "the oil used in religious rites was of great value. Compare the rections given in the Scriptures for making that which was used in the rvice of the Tabernacle," and, generally—see Leviticus c. ii. for a escription of the various kinds of sacred cakes made of fine flour and oil ed in the sacrificial offerings of the Jews.

Note 12 (p. 45). "I'll voice the strain."

I have carefully read all that has been written on this difficult passage, nd conclude that it is better to rest contented with the natural reference of ὧν to the old age of the singer, indicated by ἔτι, and the previous ne of the Anapests, than to venture with FR., HUM., and LINWOOD, on reference which I cannot but think is more far-fetched. The line ἀλκὰν ύμφυτος ἀιων is corrupt, and no rigid rendering of it ought to be attempted. UCKLEY in a note almost disclaims his own version.

Note 13 (p. 46). "The diverse-minded kings."

δυὸ λήμασι δισσούς. Surely this expression is too distinct and rominent to be slurred over lightly, as CON. seems inclined to do. I llow my own feeling of a passage so strongly marked by a peculiar hraseology, and LINWOOD. It will be observed that, in the Iliad, while gamemnon behaves in a high and haughty style to Achilles, Menelaus onducts himself everywhere, and especially in the case of Antilochus xiii. 612), with mildness and moderation, so as justly to allow himself the oast,

"ὡς ἐμὸς δύποτε θυμὸς ὑπερφιάλος καὶ ἀπηνής."

Note 14 (p. 46). "Winged hounds."

"This is one of those extravagances of expression in which the wild ancy of Æschylus often indulged, and for which he is rallied by Aristo-hanes."—HARFORD. I cannot allow this to pass without remark. No xpression could be more appropriate to picture that singular combination of he celerity of the bird nature, with the ferocity of the quadruped, which is escribed here, and in the Prometheus, in the speech of Mercury. Besides, n the present case the prophetic style would well excuse the boldness of the hrase, were any excuse required. HARFORD has put the tame expression, "Eagles," into his text; but Shelley in his "Prometheus Unbound," had ot the least hesitation to adopt the Greek phrase.

Note 15 (p. 47). "The fair goddess."

ἀ καλὰ, "the beauteous one."—Sew. An epithet which Con. surely wrong to omit, for it is characteristic. To this Muller has ca attention in his *Prolegomena zu einer wissensch; Mythologie* (p. edit. 1825) noting the expressions of Sappho, ἀρίστη καὶ καλλίστη, *the and the fairest*, as applied to Artemis, according to the testimony Pausanias, I. 29. The prominence given by Æschylus here to that funct of Artemis, by which, as the goddess of beauty, she is protectress of wild beasts of the forest, is quite Homeric; as we may see from these th lines of the Odyssey:—

> "Even as Artemis, dart-rejoicing, o'er the mountains walks sublime,
> O'er the lofty ridge of Taygetus, o'er the Erymanthian steep,
> And with gladsome heart beholds the wild boar and the nimble stag."
>
> VI. 10

According to the elemental origin of mythology, this superintende naturally arose from the fact, that Artemis was the Moon, and that wild beasts go abroad to seek for prey in the night time.

Note 16 (p. 47). "I pray thee, Pæan, may she never send."

In the original Ἰήϊον παιᾶνα, a well-known epithet of Apollo, as in opening chorus of the Œdipus Tyrannos, Ἰηϊὲ Δάλιε παιάν, containing invocation of the Delphic god, quoted by Peile. From the practice frequently invoking the name of the gods in the public hymns, as in modern Litanies, the name of the divine person passed over to the song t voiced his praises—(Iliad I. 473)—and thence became the appellation— in the modern word pæan—for a hymn generally—(Proclus Chresto Gaisford. Hephaest., p. 419)—or at least a hymn of jubilee, sadness a sorrow of every kind being naturally abhorrent from the worship of beneficent sun god (p. 72, above).

Note 17 (p. 47). "Stern-purposed waits the child-avenging wrat

This passage is obscure in the original, and, no doubt, purposely as became the prophetic style. I do not, therefore, think we are bou with Sym., to give the

Child-avenging wrath

a special and distinctly pronounced reference to Clytemnestra, displeas with Agamemnon for allowing the sacrifice of Iphigenia—

> "Homeward returning see her go,
> And sit alone in sullen woe;
> While child-avenging anger waits
> Guileful and horrid at the palace gates."

Though I have no doubt she is alluded to among other Furies that ha the house of Atreus; and the poet very wisely supplies here a motive. Well., and Lin.; and my version, though free, I hope does nothing m than express this idea of a retributive wrath brooding through long ye over a doomed family, and ever and anon, when apparently laid, breaki out with new manifestations—an idea, however, so expressed in the pres passage that, as Dr. Peile says, "No translation can adequately set it fort

Note 18 (p. 47). "Jove, or what other name."

After the above sublime introduction follows the Invocation of Jove, the supreme over-ruling Deity, who alone, by his infinite power and wisdo is able to lead the believing worshipper through the intricacies of a seeming

perplexed Providence. The passage is one of the finest in ancient poetry, and deserves to be specially considered by theological students. The reader will note carefully the reverential awe with which the Chorus names the god invoked—a feeling quite akin to that anxiety which takes possession of inexperienced people when they are called on to address written or spoken words to persons of high rank. Many instances of this kind are quoted from the ancients by VICTORIUS, in STANLEY'S notes, by SYM., and by PEILE. The most familiar instance to which I can refer the general reader is in the second chapter of Livy's first book :—

"Situs est Æneas, quemcumque eum dici jus fasque est, super Numicium flumen. Jovem indigetem appellant."

If in so obvious a matter a profound mythologist like Welcker—(Tril., p. 104)—should have found in this language of deepest reverence signs of free-thinking and irony, we have only another instance of the tyrannous power of a favourite idea to draw facts from their natural cohesion, that they may circle round the nucleus of an artificial crystallization. Sewell has also taken up the same idea with regard to the scepticism of this passage ; and in him, no less, must we attribute this notion to the influence of a general theory with regard to the religious opinions of Æschylus, rather than to any criticism which the present passage could possibly warrant.

Note 19 (p. 47). "With all-defiant valour brimming o'er."

A very literal rendering of the short, but significant, original *παμμαχῳ θρὰσει βρύων*, on which SYM. remarks that "it presents the magnificent and, to us, incongruous image of a giant all-steeled for battle, and bearing his boldness like a tree bearing its blossoms." But there is no reason that I know for confining *Βρύω* here to its special use in Iliad XVII. 56 (*Βρύει ἄνθεϊ λευκῳ*) and other such passages. It rather suggests generally, as SEW. says, "ideas of violence, exuberance, and uproar," like *βρυάζων* in Suppl. 856. He has accordingly given

"With all-defying spirit, like a boiling torrent roaring,"

from which I have borrowed one word, with a slight alteration, but consider myself safer in not tying down the general word *βρύων*, to the special case of a *torrent* any more than of a *tree*. The recent Germans—"*Im Gefühle stolzer Kraft*" (FR.), and "*allbewährten Trotzes hehr*"—are miserably tame after Humboldt's admirable "*strotzend kampfbegierig frech*." As to the meaning of the passage, the three celestial dynasties of Uranus, Saturn, and Jove are plainly indicated, though who first threw this light on a passage certainly obscure, I cannot say. So far as I can see, it was SCHUTZ. The Scholiast (A in BUTLER) talks of the Titans and Typhon, which is, at all events, on the right scent. Neither ABRESCH nor STAN. seem to have understood the passage ; and POTTER, disdaining to take a hint from the old Scholiast, generalises away about humanity.

Note 20 (p. 48). "Our hearts with gracious force."

The *βιαίως* certainly refers to the *χάρις*, and not to the *ημένων*, with the diluted sense of *pollenter* given it by WELL. ; and in this view I have no objection, with BLOMFIELD and CON., to read *βίαιος*. I am not, however, so sure as CON. that the common reading is wrong. *βιαίως* may be an abrupt imperfectly enunciated expression (and there are not a few such in Æschylus) for *exercising* or *using compulsion*. Poets are not always the most accurate of grammarians.

Note 21 (p. 48). "In Aulis tides hoarse refluent."

The harbour of Aulis, opposite Euboea the district still called *Ulik* (Wordsworth's Athens and Attica, c. I.). In narrow passages of the s as at Corryvreckan, on the west coast of Scotland, there are apt to be str eddies and currents; and this is specially noted of the channel betw Aulis and Chalcis, by Livy (XXVIII. 6. *haud facile alia infestior cl statio est*) and other passages adduced by Butt. in Peile.

Note 22 (p. 49). "Is the gods' right. So be it."

I am unable to see how the translation of this passage, given by S agrees with the context and with the spirit of Agamemnon's conduct, the view of it taken by the poet. Sym. says—

> "They're not her parents; they may call aloud
> For the dire rite to smoothe the stormy flood
> All fierce and thirsty for a virgin's blood."

And Droysen, though more literally, says the same thing—"*Dass sie windstillende Sühnopfer, das jungfräuliche Blut heischen und schreien, is denn recht? Nein, sieg das Gute!*" and Fr. also takes *θέμις* out of A memnon's mouth, and gives it to the Greeks. "*Finden sie recht. Z Heil sey's!*" Perhaps the reason for preferring this version with the Germ lies in giving too great a force and prominence to the *μετέγνω* in the foll ing strophe. But this may refer only to the change of a father's instinct feelings (expressed by silence only in this ode) to the open resolution making common cause with the diviner and the chieftain.

Note 23 (p. 49). ". . . Unblissful blew the gale
That turned the father's heart."

These words include both the *τροπαίαν* and the *μετέγνω* of the origin I join *βρότους* or *βρότοις* with the following clause, the sense being the sa according to either reading. The verb *θρασύνει*, according to Con.'s v just reasoning, seems grammatically to require *βρότους*, though Fr. sa with a reference to Bernhardy, that *βρότοις* may be defended. Sym. given a translation altogether different; though he admits that the se given in my version, and in all the modern versions, is the most obvi one. His objection to connecting *βρότους* with the following sentence I not understand.

Note 24 (p. 49). ". . . consecrate
His ships for Troy."

προτέλεια ναῶν, *First fruits*, literally, as Sew. has it, will scarcely here; "first piation of the wind-bound fleet" of Sym. is very good. Hum Droy., and Fr. all use *Weihe* in different combinations; a word wh seems to suit the present passage very well, and I have accordingly adop the corresponding English term.

Note 25 (p. 49). "Where prone and spent she lies."

παντὶ θυμῷ προνωπῆ, literally "*prone with her whole soul;*" "*body a soul,*" as Con. has it. The words are so arranged that it is impossible determine to what *παντὶ θυμῷ* refers, whether to the general action *λαβ* or to the special position *προνωπῆ*. Sewell's remark that "there is far m intensity of thought in applying *παντὶ θυμῷ* to *λαβεῖν*," may be turned other way. The phrase certainly must give additional intensity to whiche

ord it is joined with. The act itself is sufficiently cruel, without adding
y needless traits of ferocity.

Note 26 (p. 49). ". . . her saffron robe
Sweeping the ground."

κρόκου βαφὰς εις πέδον χέουσα; "dropping her saffron veil," says SYM.; erhaps rightly, but I see no ground for certainty. The application of *ρόκου βαφὰς* to the drops of blood seems a modern idea, which has proeeded from some critic who had not poetry enough to understand the pplication of *χέουσα* to anything but a liquid. Except in peculiar circumances, the word *κρόκος*, as CON. justly observes (see note 73 below), annot be applied to the blood; and, in the present passage, it is plain the nal work of the knife is left purposely undescribed.

Note 27 (p. 49). "The virgin strain they heard."

I cannot sufficiently express my astonishment that HUMB., DROY., and R., as if it were a point of Germanism, have all conspired to wrench the *ἰμα* out of its natural connection in this beautiful passage, and to apply the hole concluding clause to the self-devotion of Iphigenia at the altar, rather han to her dutiful obedience at the festal scene just described. The fine oetical feeling of SYM. protested against this piece of tastelessness. These commentators," says he, "seem to have been ignorant of the poet's ntention, who raises interest, pity, and honor to the height, by presenting phigenia at the altar, and unveiling herself preparatory to her barbarous xecution, on which point of the picture he dwells, contrasting her present tuation with her former happiness, her cheerfulness, her songs, and he festivities in her father's house." It is strange that the Germans do not ee that *ὕποπτον ἀῶνα* is the most unfortunate of all terms to apply to the ondition of Agamemnon, as a sacrificer; while it is most pertinent to his revious fortunes, before his evil destiny began to be revealed in the sacrifice f his beloved daughter.

Note 28 (p. 50). ". . . What boots
To forecast woe, which, on no wavering wing."

It is both mortifying and consoling to think that all the learning which as been expended on this corrupt passage from *Δίκα* down to *ἀνγαῖς*, brings ut nothing more than what already lies in the old Scholiast. As to the etails of the text, I wish I could say, with the same confidence as CON., hat WELL. and HER.'s *σύνορθρον ἀνγαῖς* is a bit more certain than FR.'s *ὑναρθρον ἀραις*, which, however, I am inclined to prefer, from its agreeing etter with the general sombre hue of the ode.

Note 29 (p. 50). "Ever swift
Though wingless, Fame."

ἄπτερος is an epithet by negation after a fashion not at all uncommon in he Greek drama; the meaning being, *though fame is not a bird, and has no wings, yet it flies as fast as if it had.* The idea that *ἄπτερος* is the same as *πτερωτὸς* I agree with CON. is the mere expedient of despair. I have not he slightest doubt that Rumour is called a *wingless* messenger, just as Dust called a *voiceless* messenger in the Seven against Thebes. SYM. is too ubtle in explaining *ἄπτερος* after the analogy of the beautiful simile in irgil, Æneid V. 215, *so swift as not to appear to move its wings.*

Note 30 (p. 51). ". . . He from Ida shot the spark."

The geographical mountain points in the following famous descript passages are as follows: (1) Mount Ida, near Troy; (2) the Island Lemnos, in the Ægean, half-way between Asia and Europe, due West; Mount Athos, the South point of the most Easterly of the three peninsu that form the South part of Macedonia; (4) a station somewhere betw Athos and Bœotia, which the poet has characterised only by the name of Watchman Macistus; (5) the Messapian Mount, West of Anthedon in North of Bœotia; (6) Mount Cithœron, in the South of Bœotia; (7) Mo Aegiplanctus, between Megara and Corinth; (8) Mount Arachne, in Argo between Tiryns and Epidaurus, not far from Argos.

Note 31 (p. 51). ". . . the forward strength
Of the far-travelling lamp strode gallantly."

I have not had the courage with SYM. to reject the *πρὸς ἡδονὴν* and sup a verb. The phrase is not colloquial, as he says, but occurs, as WE points out, in Prom. 492. MEDWYN has "crossing the breast of ocean w a speed plumed by its joy." That there is some blunder in the passage want of a verb seems to indicate, but, with our present means, it appe wise to let it alone; not, like FR., from a mere conjecture, to introduce *ὑχ* for *ἰσχύς*, and translate—

"Und fern hin dass der Wanderflamme heller Schein,
In lust die Fische auf des Meeres Rücken trieb."

Are we never to see an end of these extremely ingenious, but very use conjectures?

Note 32 (p. 51). "Weaving the chain unbroken."

μὴ κατιζεσθαι—HEATH. The true reading not to be discovered.

Note 33 (p. 51). ". . . a mighty beard of flame."

The Hindoos in their description of the primeval male who, with a th sand heads and a thousand faces, issued from the mundane egg, use the sa image—"the hairs of his body are trees and plants, of his head the clou *of his beard, lightning*, and his nails are rocks."—Colonel VANS KENNE Ch. VIII. Our translators generally (except SEW. and CON.) have esche transplanting this image literally into English; and even the Germans h stumbled, FR. giving *Feuersaüle* most unhappily. DROY., when he "*Schweife*," gives the true idea, but I am not afraid to let the orig stand.

Note 34 (p. 51). ". . . the headlands that look down
On the Saronic gulf."

I see no proof that *πρῶν* ever means anything but a promontory, an cannot follow CON. in reading *κάτοπτρον*.

Note 35 (p. 51).
"Each from the other fired with happy news," etc.

An allusion to the famous *λαμπαδηφορία*, or torch race, practised by Greeks at the Parthenon and other festivals. In this race a burning to was passed from hand to hand, so that, notwithstanding the extreme cele of the movement, the flame might not go out. See the article by LIDD in the *Dict. Antiq.* where difficulties in the detail are explained.

Note 36 (p. 52). "To their hearts' content."

The reading of WELL. and the MS. ὡς δυσδαίμονες will never do, though ED. certainly has shown genius by striking out of it

> "Soundly as mariners when the danger's past
> They sleep."

ne connection decidedly requires ὧς ἐνδαιμονες, neither more nor less than to their hearts' content," as I have rendered it. But one would almost be conciled to the sad state of the text of Æschylus, if every difficulty were ared with such a masterly bound as MED. here displays. The Germans, t. and DR., incapable, or not liking such capers, adhere to the simple δαίμονες. HUMB., according to his general practice, follows the captain-ip of Hermann, and gives "*Götterngleich* (ὡς δε δαίμονες)."

Note 37 (p. 52). ". . . Happy if the native gods
They reverence."

This sober fear of the evil consequences of excess in the hour of triumph, characteristic a trait of ancient poetry, and purposely introduced here by ytemnestra to serve her own purpose, finds an apt illustration in the nduct of Camillus at the siege of Veii, as reported by Livy (V. 21)—

"Ad prædam miles permissu dictatoris discurrit. Quæ quum ante oculos ejus ali-antum spe atque opinione major majorisque pretii rerum ferretur, dicitur, manus ad lum tollens precatus esse, ut si cui deorum hominumque nimia sua fortuna populique omani videretur, ut eam invidiam lenire quam minimo suo privato incommodo, publico-e populo Romano liceret.

Note 38 (p. 52). "Having turned the goal."

The reader is aware that in the ancient racecourse there was a *meta*, or al, at each end of the course, round which the racers turned round *netaque fervidis evitata rotis*.—Hor. Carm. I. 1; and Æneid V. 129).

Note 39 (p. 52). "If they have sinned."

ἁμπλακητος. In defence of this reading, which, with WELL., I prefer, ON. has a very excellent note, to which I refer the critical reader. FR., llowing AHRENS (as he often does), makes a bold transposition of the lines, t the sense remains pretty much the same. As to the guilt incurred by the reeks, spoken of here and in the previous lines, the poet has put it, as some lliation of her own contemplated deed, into the mouth of Clytemnestra, t in perfect conformity also with the Homeric thelogy, which supposes at suffering must always imply guilt. Thus in the Odyss. III. 130–135, d Nestor explains to Telemachus:—

> "But when Priam's high-perched city by the Greeks was captured, then
> In their swift ships homeward sailing, they were scattered by a god;
> To the Greeks great Jove had purposed in his heart a black return,
> For not all had understanding, and not all observant lived
> Of Justice."

Note 40 (p. 53). "The gods are blind."

I cannot here forbear recalling to the reader's recollection a similar ssage in Milton:—

> "Just are the ways of God
> And justifiable to men;
> Unless there be who think not God at all.
> If any be, they walk obscure:
> For of such doctrine never was there school,
> But the heart of the fool,
> And no man therein doctor but himself."—SAMSON AGONISTES.

Note 41 (p. 53). "Self-will fell Até's daughter."

I have here paraphrased a little the two lines—

βιᾶται δ' ἀ τάλαινα πειθὼ
προβουλόπαις ἄφερτος Ἄτας—

in which two evil powers are personified—*Ate*, destruction, and *Pe* persuasion, which here must be understood of that evil self-persuasion which, in the pride of self-will and vain confidence, a man justifies his w deeds to himself, and is driven recklessly on to destruction. The cas Napoleon, in his Russian expedition, is in point. What follows shows Paris is meant. As to the strange, truly Æschylean compound, προβουλό Con. says well, that the simple πρόβουλος means "one who joins in a liminary vote," and, of course, the compound is, as Lin. has it, a "f counselling child."

Note 42 (p. 54). "Even as a boy in wanton sport."

There is a great upheaping of incongruous images in this passage which, perhaps, the poet may be blamed; as the one prevents the c from coming with a vivid and distinct impression on the mind. This in of the boy chasing the butterfly is, however, the one which places inconsiderate love of Paris and Helen most distinctly before us; an comes, therefore, with peculiar propriety, preceded by the more general vague images, and immediately before the mention of the offender.

Note 43 (p. 54). "The prophets of the house loud wailing."

δόμων προφῆται. I have retained the original word here, becaus appears most appropriate to the passage; but the reader must be warned a reference to the familiar example in Epist. Tit. I. 12, that with ancients the characters of poet and prophet were confounded in a way belongs not at all to our modern usage of the same words. Epimenide Crete, in fact, to whom the Apostle Paul alludes, was not only a prop but also a physician, like Apollo (ἰατρόμαντις, Eumen. v. 62). In the s way the Hebrew word *Nabah*, prophetess, is applied to Miriam, Exod. 20; and it may well be, that Æschylus, in the true spirit of these old ti and also following the deep religious inspiration of his Muse, alludes to a character more sacred than the Homeric ἀοιδός, *Minstrel* or *Bard*, this distinction should, of course, be preserved in the translation. S with great happiness, in my opinion, has given "the bards of fate;" b were useless to press any such nice matter in this passage, especially w we call to mind the high estimation in which the Homeric ἀοιδὸς stan the Odyss., and the remarkable passage, III. 267, where a minstrel is re sented as appointed by Agamemnon to counsel and control Clytemnest his absence, pretty much as a family confessor would do in a modern Ro Catholic family.

Note 44 (p. 54). "He silent stood in sadness, not in wrath."

Here commences one of the most difficult, and at the same time or the most beautiful passages in the Agamemnon. The words,

πάρεστι σιγᾶς', ἄτιμος, ἀλόιδορος
ἄδικτος ἀφέμενον ἰδεῖν,

are so corrupt, that a translator is quite justified in striking that sense o them which is most fit on grounds of taste, and in this view I have hesitation in adopting Hermann's reading,

πάρεστι σιγὰς (σιγηλος) ἄτιμος ἀλόιδορος
ἄληστος ἀφεμένων ἰδεῖν ;

odified thus by Orelli—

ἄπιστος ἀφεμέναν ἰδεῖν—(*See Wellauer*).

ith a reference to Menelaus and not to Helen. In doing so, I am not at moved by any merely philological consideration ; but I may observe that e remark made by WELL., PEILE, and CON., that the words cannot refer Menelaus, because he has not yet been mentioned, can have little weight the present chorus, in the first antistrophe of which Paris is first alluded by dim indications, and afterwards distinctly by name. This method of rely hinting at a person, before naming him, is common in all poetry, but culiarly characteristic of Æschylus. Besides, it is impossible to deny that e πόθος in the next line refers to Menelaus, and can refer to no other. N., who refers the words to Helen, translates thus—

"She stands in silence, scorned, yet unrebuking,
Most sweetly sorrowfully looking
Of brides that have from wedlock fled ;"

which I have this further objection, that it is contrary to the poet's inten- n and to the moral tone of the piece, to paint the fair fugitive with such engaging look of reluctance to leave her husband ; on the contrary, he ames her in the strongest language, ἄτλητα τλᾶσα, and represents her as ving Argos with all the hurry of a common elopement, where both parties e equally willing for the amorous flight, βέβακε ῥίμφα διὰ πυλᾶν. After ich our fancy has nothing to do but imagine her giving her sails to the nd as swiftly as possible, and bounding gaily over the broad back of ocean th her gay paramour. In this connection, to say "*she* STANDS," appears ite out of place. In my view of this "very difficult and all but desperate ssage" (PEILE) I am supported by SYM. in an able note, which every ident ought to read, by MED. and SEW., BUCK., HUMB., and DROYS. either is FR. against me, because, though following a new reading of ermann,

πάρεστι σιγὰς ἀτίμους ἀλοιδόρους
'αισχρῶς ἀφειμενων ἰδειν,

avoids all special allusions to Menelaus, it is evident that the picture of litary desolation given in his translation can have no reference but to lace of the king of Sparta—

"Ein Schweigen, sieh ! voll von Schmach, nicht gebrochen church
Vorwurf, beherrscht die Einsamkeit."

Note 45 (p. 56). "The bolt from on high shall blast his eye."

"PEILE greatly admires Klausen's interpretation"—

"Jacitur oculis a Jove fulmen,"

t the passages which the latter adduce are not to the point. The Greeks o not attribute any governing virtue to the eyes of the gods, further than is, that the immortal beings who are supposed to govern human affairs ust see, and take cognizance of them. Jupiter's eye may glare like light- ng, but the real lightning is always hurled from his hand. Compare Soph. ntiq. 157. The words βάλλεται ὄσσοις Διόθεν can bear no other sense turally than "is flashed in the eyes from Jove."—CON.

Note 46 (p. 57). "Where women wield the spear."

The spear (δόρυ) is with the Greeks the regular emblem of war, as the word is with us ; so a famous warrior in Homer is δουρικλυτὸς, a famous

spearman, and a warrior generally *ἀιχμητὴς*. Further, as in the heroic semi-civilized age, authority presents itself, not under the form of law a peaceful order, so much as under that of force and war, the spear comes be a general emblem of authority; so in the present passage. St. Pa language, Rom. xiii. 4, *the magistrate weareth not the sword* (*μάχαιραν*) *vain*, gives the modern counterpart of the Æschylean phraseology.

Note 47 (p. 57). ". . . our healer from much harm."

παιώνιος. I have no hesitation whatever in leaving WELL. here, much I generally admire his judicious caution. "'Αγώνιους in the next line," s CON., "at once convicts the old reading of tautology, and accounts for introduction." When a clear cause for a corrupt reading is shown b natural wandering of the eye, I see no wisdom in obstinately adhering t less appropriate reading. The emendation originated, according to PEI with a writer in the Classical Journal; and was thence adopted by SCHO FIELD, PEILE, CON., and FRANZ, who names Ahrens as its author. LIN also calls it "very probable."

Note 48 (p. 57). ". . . ye sun-fronting gods."

δαίμονες ἀντήλιοι. MED. has given the words a special application—

"Ye images of our gods that stand
Before the eastern gate."

But I suppose the reference may be only to the general custom of plac the statues of the gods in open public places, and in positions where t might front the sun.—See Hesychius and Tertullian, quoted by STAN.

Note 49 (p. 58). "His pledge is forfeited."

I agree with CON. that the juridical language used in the previous l fixes down the meaning of *ρυσίου* here beyond dispute; which meani indeed—*ἐνέχυρον*, a *pledge* or *gage*, is that given by the Scholiast on Iliad 674. STAN. enounces this clearly in his Notes; only there is no need supposing, with him, that the gage means Helen, or any one else. merely a juridical way of saying that Paris was worsted in battle—he forfeited his caution-money.

Note 50 (p. 59). "These spoils, a shining grace, there to remai
An heritage for ever."

The word *ἀρχαῖον* in this version seems most naturally to have a prosp tive reference, to express which a paraphrase seems necessary in Engli but a similar use of *Vetustas* is common in Latin.—Cic. Attic. XIV. pro-Mil. 35. Virgil's Æneid X. 792. SEW. takes it retrospectively; th

"Unto their ancient homes in Hellas land
A pride and joy."

Note 51 (p. 60). "No more than dyer's art can tincture brass."

χαλκοῦ βαφὰς. One cannot dye a hard impenetrable substance, copper or brass, by the mere process of steeping, as may be done with a substance like cloth. Clytemnestra seems to say that her ears are impe trable in the same way. So SYM., CON., SEW.; and I have little doub to this being the true meaning—but should we not read *χαλκὸς more than brass knows dyeing?*

Note 52 (p. 60). "Far from the honors of the blissful gods."

χωρὶς ἡ τιμὴ θεῶν. I translate so, simply because this rendering seems to e most naturally in the words, when interpreted by the immediately pre-eding context. The other translation which I originally had here,

"To every god his separate hour belongs
Of rightful honor,"

eems to spring from the contrast of the "pæan to the Furies" mentioned elow, with the hymns of joyful thanksgivings to the gods that suit the resent occasion. But when the term "gods" is used generally on a joyful ccasion, it seems more agreeable to Greek feeling to interpret it as exclud-g than as including the Furies. The hymns in the Eumenides show that ney were considered as a dreadful power in the background, rather than rominent figures in the foreground of Hellenic polytheism. But, however nis be, the more obvious key to such a doubtful passage is surely that of the ain of thought which immediately precedes.

Note 53 (p. 61). "Fire and the sea, sworn enemies of old," etc.

This passage, in the original, boils with a series of high-sounding words, ισκύμαντα, κεροτοπούμεναι, ὀμβροκτύπῳ, extremely characteristic both of ne general genius of the poet and the special subject of poetic description. have endeavoured, according to the best of my ability, not to lose a single ne of this powerful painting; but, as it is more than likely I may have issed some point, or brought it feebly out, I would refer the reader to the ble versions of SYM. and MED., which are very good in this place. About ne κακὸς ποιμὴν, whether it refer to the whole tempest, as SYM. makes it, or o a part of it (στρόβος) as in my version, there can be no doubt, I think, that ere ποιμὴν can mean nothing but "pilot," as in the Persian ποιμάνωρ means commander. There can be no objection to retaining the word "shepherd," ut I do not like CON.'s "demon-swain" at all. It seems to me to bring in foreign, and somewhat of a Gothic idea.

Note 54 (p. 61). "That ocean hell."

ἄδην πόντιον, I took this from MED. and give him a thousand thanks for upplying me with so literal, and yet so admirable a translation. SYM. is lso excellent here, though, as usual, too fine—

"O how the day looked lovely, when ashore
We crawled, escaped from the watery jaws
Of a sea death."

Note 55 (p. 61). "Far-labouring o'er the loosely-driving main."

There is a fine word in the original here, σποδουμένου, easily and dmirably rendered by FR.—*zerstaübt*—but to express which I have found nyself forced to have recourse to a cognate idea. The main idea is dis-ersion and diffusion, *to drive about like dust*, or, perhaps, the meaning may e, *to rub down to dust*.—See Passow. In the present passage the context nakes the former meaning preferable.

Note 56 (p. 61). "By Jove's devising."

The reader will note here the supreme controlling power of Jove, form-ng, as it were, a sort of monotheistic keystone to the many-stoned arch f Hellenic Polytheism. Μηχαναῖς Διὸς here is just equivalent to our phrase *y Divine interposition*, or, *by the interposition of Divine Providence*, or ne supreme moral superintendence of Jove.

Note 57 (p. 62). "Helen the taker!"

There is an etymological allusion in the original here, concerning wh see the Notes to the Prometheus Bound, v. 85. The first syllable of Hel name in Greek means to take, from *αἱρέω* 2 aor *ἕλον*. "No one understands the deep philosophy of Æschylus and his oriental turn thought will suspect the play upon the name of Helen to be a frigid exer of wit," says SEW., who has transmuted the pun into English in no fashion thus—

> "Helen, since as suited well
> Hell of nations, heroes' hell,
> Hell of cities, from the tissued
> Harem-chamber veils she issued."

Note 58 (p. 62). ". . . giant Zephyr."

I see no reason why so many translators, from STAN. downward, sh have been so fond to render *γίγαντος* "*earth-born*" here, as if there any proof that any such genealogical idea was hovering before the min the poet when he used the word. I entirely agree with CON. that notion of *strength* may have been all that was intended (as, indeed, we in Homer the Zephyr always the strongest wind), and, therefore, I re the original word. SYM. Anglicising, after his fashion, says, not inaptly

> "Fanned by Zephyr's buxom gales;"

and CON. changes *giant* into *Titan*, perhaps wisely, to avoid cer ludicrous associations.

Note 59 (p. 62). "Kin but not kind."

Another etymological allusion; *κῆδος* meaning both *kin* and *care*. S has turned it differently—

> "And a marriage truly hight,
> A marjoy," etc.

HARF. does not relish this "absurd punning" at all, and misses it ou this place; so also POTTER; but I agree altogether with SEW. that "t is nothing more fatal to any poet than to generalize his particularit Shakespere also puts puns into his most serious passages; a peculi which we must even tolerate like an affected way of walking or tal in a beautiful woman; though, for the reason stated in the note to Prometheus, above referred to, the ancient, when he puns upon pr names, is by no means to be considered as an offender against the of good taste, in the same way as the modern.

Note 60 (p. 63). "A servant of Até, a priest of Ruin."

Até the goddess of destruction, already mentioned (p. 53), and w name has been naturalized in English by the authority of Shakespere. Homer *ατη* appears (1) as an infatuation of mind leading to perdit (2) as that perdition effected; (3) as an allegorical personage, eldest bo Jove, the cause of that infatuation of mind and consequent perd (Il. XIX. v. 91). In the tragedians, *Ἄτη* is more habitually clothed a distinct and prominent personality.

Note 61 (p. 64). "A haughty heart."

In a passage hopelessly corrupt, and where no two editors agree in reading, I have necessarily been reduced to the expedient of transla with a certain degree of looseness from the text of the MSS. as give

ELL. Through this text, broken and disjointed as it is, the meaning mmers with a light sufficient to guide the reader, who wishes only to ive at the idea, without aspiring at the reconstitution of the lost gramma- al form of the text ; and it is a satisfaction to think that all the translators, m POT. to CON., however they may vary in single phrases, give sub- ntially the same idea, and in a great measure the same phrase. This idea, most important one in the Greek system of morals, is well expressed SYM. in his note on this place—"The Chorus here moralizes and dwells the consequences to succeeding generations of the crimes of their pre- cessors. He traces, as it were, a moral succession, handed down from her to son, where one transgression begets another as its inevitable result. he first parent stock was '*ὕβρις*' a spirit of insolence or insubordination, eaking out into acts of outrage, the forerunner of every calamity in a ecian republic, against which the philosophers and tragedians largely claimed. They denounced it as well from a principle of policy as a senti- ent of religion. In short, the poet treats here of the moral concatenation cause and effect, the consequence to the descendants of their progenitors' isconduct, operating either by the force of example or of hereditary dis- sition, which in the mind of the Chorus produces the effect of an esistible fatality."—I may mention that I have retained the original word *ιμων* in its English form "demon," this being, according to my feeling, ne of the few places where the one can be used for the other without bstituting a modern, and, therefore, a false idea.

Note 62 (p. 65). "Fawn with watery love."

ὑδαρεῖ σάινειν φιλότητι. This is one of those bold dramatic touches hich mark the hand of a Shakespere, or an Æschylus, and, by trans- uting or diluting which, the translator, in my opinion, commits a capital n. HARF., with his squeamish sensibility, has slurred over the whole ssage, and even FR., like all Germans, an advocate for close translation, ves the rapid generality of "*trügend ;*" MED., from carelessness, I hope, d not from principle, has sinned in the same way, and KENNEDY likewise ; t I am happy in having both CON. and SYM. for my companions, when retain a simile which is as characteristic of my author as a crooked beak of an eagle. This note may serve for not a few similar cases, where the ce critic will do well to consult the Greek author before he blames e English translator.

Note 63 (p. 67). "He might have boasted of a triple coil."

I consider it quite legitimate in a translator, where critical doctors differ, nd where decision is difficult or impossible, to embody in his version the leas of both parties, where that can be done naturally, and without forcing, s in the present instance. It seems to me on the one hand that *την κάτω γὰρ λέγω* has more pregnancy of expression when applied to the dead Geryon, han when interpreted of the earth ; and, on the other hand, I cannot think ith SYM. that the expression *τρίμοιρον χλαῖναν*, when applied to the earth, "rank nonsense." There are many phrases in Æschylus that, if translated terally, sound very like nonsense in English. The parenthetic clause "*of im below I speak not*," is added from a superstitious feeling, to avoid the ad omen of speaking of a living person as dead. So WELL. and SYM., and his appears the most natural qualification in the circumstances.

Note 64 (p. 7). "Thy Phocian spear-guest."

Speaking of the era of the great Doric migration with regard to Mega
Bishop THIRLWALL (Hist. Greece, c. VII.) writes as follows:—"Meg
itself was, at this time, only one, though probably the principal, among
little townships which were independent of each other, and were not
frequently engaged in hostilities, which, however, were so mitigated
regulated by local usage as to present rather the image than the reality
war. They were never allowed to interrupt the labours of the husbandm
The captive taken in these feuds was entertained as a guest in his enem
house, and when his ransom was fixed, was dismissed before it was paid.
he discharged his debt of honour he became, under a peculiar na
(δορύξενος), the friend of his host; a breach of the compact dishonoured
for life both among the strangers and his neighbours—a picture of soci
which we could scarcely believe to have been drawn from life, if it did
agree with other institutions which we find described upon the best autho
as prevailing at the same period in other parts of Greece."

Note 65 (p. 69). "Come, boy, unbind these sandals."

This passage will at once suggest to the Christian reader the well-kno
passage in Exod. iii. 5., "take off thy shoes from thy feet, for the gro
where thou standest is holy ground," which KEN. aptly adduces, and co
pares it with Lev. xxx. 19, and Juvenal Sat. VI. 159—

"Observant ubi festa mero pede Sabbata reges,"

and other passages. In the same way the hand held up in attestat
before a bench of grave judges, according to our modern usage, must
ungloved.

Note 66 (p. 69).

"Jove, Jove the perfecter! perfect thou my vow."

Ζεῦ τέλειε. I see no reason in the connection of this passage to give
epithet of τέλειος a special allusion to Jove, as along with Juno, the pat
of marriage. BLOM., PEILE, and among the translators, MED. and K
take this view. But POT., SYM., CON., FR., VOSS., and DROYS. cont
themselves with the more obvious and general meaning. It is not c
tended, I presume, by any one that the epithet τέλειος, when applied
Jove, *necessarily* refers to marriage, independently of the context, as
instance in Eumen. 28. The origin of the epithet may be seen in Hom
Il. IV. 160–168, etc.

Note 67 (p. 69). ". . . unbidden and unhired."

"Poor Louis! With them it is a hollow phantasmagoria, where,
mimes, they mope and mow, and *utter false sounds for hire*, but with t
it is frightful earnest."—CARLYLE's French Revolution; the ancient and
modern, with equal felicity, alluding to the custom prevalent in anci
times of hiring women to mourn for the dead. We must also note, h
ever, that there is an example here of that spontaneous prophecy of
heart by god-given presentiment, which is so often mentioned in Hom
The ancients, indeed, were the furthest possible removed from that narr
conception of a certain modern theology, which confines the hig
influences of inspiration to a privileged sacerdotal order. In St. Pa
writings, the whole Church prophesies; and so in Homer the fair Hel

o had no pretensions to the character of a professional soothsayer, pre-
es her interpretation of an omen by saying,

"Hear my word; as in my heart the immortal gods suggest the thought,
I will read the omen rightly, as the sure event shall show." Odys. XV. 172.

e words used by Homer to express this action of the divine on the
man mind are *βάλλειν ὑποτίθεσθαι*, and such like, to *throw into*, and to *put
der*, or *suggest*.

Note 68 (p. 70). "Unloosed their cables from the shore."

I have not been curious in rendering this passage, as the word *παρήβησεν*
opelessly corrupt; but the general notion of my translation is taken from
M.'s note.

Note 69 (p. 71). ". . . Were link with link
In the chain of things not bound together."

ἐι δὲ μὴ τεταγμένα μοῖρα κ. τ. λ. In my opinion, Sym., Con., and Peile,
wrong in giving a different meaning to *μοῖραν* from that which they
ign to *μοῖρα* immediately preceding. In such phrases as "*truditur dies*
" (Horace) and "*Day uttereth speech unto day*," the reader naturally
aches the same idea to the same word immediately repeated. The literal
nslation of this passage, "if by the ordinance of the gods ordered Fate
not hinder Fate," seems merely to express the concatenation of things by
ine decree as given in my version. Sym's version is—

"I pause. Some Fate from Heaven forbids
The Fate within to utter more,
Else had my heart outrun my tongue,
And poured the torrent o'er."

BD. gives three lines substantially identical with mine—

"Nor would I counteract the laws of Heaven;
My heart would chain my tongue, e'en were it given
To drag the secret of the Fates to the day."

Note 70 (p. 71). ". . . the household altar."

κτησίου βωμοῦ. Literally, *the altar of our family wealth or possession*.
the same way, Jove, the supreme disposer of all human wealth, is called
ὁ κτήσιος, possessory Jove. See the Suppliants, v. 440—my translation.

Note 71 (p. 72). "My way-god, my leader Apollo!"

"Agyieus (from *ἀγυιὰ*, a way), a surname of Apollo, describing him as
e protector of the streets and public places. As such he was worshipped
Acharnæ, Mycenæ, and Tegea."—Dr. Schmitz, in the Mythol. Dict. In
e same way, by *ἐνοδιον θεὰν* (Soph. Antig. 1200), or "the way goddess," is
derstood Hecate. The Hindoos make their god *Pollear* perform a similar
nction, placing his image in all temples, streets, highways, and, in the
untry, at the foot of some tree, that travellers may make their adorations
d offerings to him before they pursue their journey.—Sonnerat in notes
the Curse of Kehama, Canto V.

Note 72 (p. 73).

"Apollo, my leader, whither hast thou led me?"

In this Antistrophe, and the preceding Strophe, there is one of those
ays on the name of the god addressed, which appear inappropriate to us,

but were meant earnestly enough by the ancients, accustomed to deal
an original language from which the significancy of proper names had
been rubbed away.—See note on Prometheus, v. 85. Besides this, there
naturally a peculiar significancy attached to the names of the gods.—
note 18, p. 338, above. In the present passage the first pun is on the n
Ἀπόλλων, Apollo, and the verb ἀπόλλυμι, which signifies to *destroy*) so
Hebrew ABADDON from ABAD, he *perished*.—Apoc. ix. 11), a functio
the Sun god familiar enough to the Greek mind, from the description of
pestilence in the opening scene of the Iliad. The second pun is on the
ἀγυιεύς, leader, or way-god, concerning which see previous note. I h
here, as in the case of Helen and Prometheus (v. 85), taken the sin
plan of explaining the epithet in the text. The translator who will
do this must either, like CON. and SYM., leave the play on the w
altogether unperceptible to the English reader, or, like SEW., be dr
to the necessity of inventing a new pun, which may not always be ha
English, and is certainly not Greek, thus—

"Apollo! Apollo!
Leader! appaller mine!
Yea! for the second time thou hast with ease
Appalled me, and destroyed me."

Note 73 (p. 74). "The blithe blood, that crimson ran
In my veins, runs pale and wan."

With this SYM. aptly compares a passage from the speech of Theodo
in Massinger's Emperor of the East—

"What an earthquake I feel in me!
And on the sudden my whole fabric totters;
My blood within me turns, and through my veins
Parting with natural redness, I discern it
Changed to a fatal yellow."

Even more strongly expressed than in our Greek poet, perhaps a little
strongly, the words, *I discern it*, certainly not improving the pass
HARF., as is his fashion, fears to follow the boldness of his author,
translates— "The ruddy drop is curdling at my heart."

And in the same spirit FR. gives *dunkelroth*.

Note 74 (p. 74). "As when in the mortal anguish."

SYM. takes his stand too confidently on a corrupt text, when he s
"POT. has entirely omitted the fallen warrior bleeding drop by drop, w
is, as it were, introduced into the background by the poet to aggravate
gloom of the picture." I read καιρία with DIND., CON., LINW., and
with which single word the fallen warrior disappears, who comes in, eve
SYM.'s version, rather abruptly.

Note 75 (p. 74). "· · · she seizes him
By the strong black horn."

HARF. finds this rough Homeric trait too strong for him. MED. has

"With her black horn she buts him.
What is that wrapt round his head?"

But, though there is some colour for this translation in the old Scholias
think the reader will scarcely judge very favourably of it, after conside
what PEILE and CON. have judiciously said on the point. As for autho

l the translators, except MED. and HUMB., from POT. downwards, Eng-
sh and German, are with me. It is scarcely necessary to remark against
larford's squeamishness, that the bull in ancient symbolical language (see
oets and coins, *passim*) was an animal in every respect as noble and kingly
s the lion and the eagle still remain.

Note 76 (p. 75). "Crieth Itys! Itys! aye."

Procne and Philomele, according to one of the most familiar of old Greek
gends, were daughters of Pandion, king of Athens; and one of them having
een given in marriage to Tereus, a king of the Thracians, in Daulis, who,
ter the marriage, offered violence to her sister—the result was, that the
ife, in a fit of mad revenge, murdered her own son Itys, and gave his flesh
o her husband to eat; and, being afterwards changed into a nightingale,
as supposed in her melodious wail continually to repeat the name of this
er luckless offspring.

Note 77 (p. 75). "The thick blossoms of its woe."

ἀμφιθαλῆ κακοῖς βίον. I hope this expression will not be considered too
rong by those who consider as well the general style of our poet, as the
ῶμεν ἄνθουν πέλαγος Αἰγαῖον νεκρῶις, v. 645 of this play (see my transla-
on, *supra*, p. 61), and the μανίας δεινὸν ἀποστάζει ἀνθηρόν τε μένος of
ophocles.—Antig. v. 960.

Note 78 (p. 77). "Soon my reeking heart shall cast."

If the reader thinks this a bold phrase, he must bear in mind that it is
assandra who speaks, and Æschylus who writes. The translation, indeed,
not literal, but the word "θερμόνους," as CON. says, "has all the marks of
enuineness," and I was more afraid of weakening it in translation than of
xaggerating it. Other translations are—

"And I my warm blood soon on earth shall pour."—SYM.
"But I shall soon press my hot heart to Earth."—CON.
"Ich aber stürze bald zur Erd im heissen Kampf."—FR.
"Ich aber sinke bald im heissen Todeskampf."—DROYS.

Note 79 (p. 77).

"Waves shall it dash from the west in the sun's face."

"The beauty of this image can only be properly appreciated by those
ho have observed the extraordinary way in which the waves of the sea
ppear to rush towards the rising sun."—ENGLISH PROSE TR. OXON.

Note 80 (p. 77). ". . . though I should wedge them
As stark as ice?"

I read πῆγμα with WELL. and the majority of editors and translators.
YM., who is sometimes a little too imperative in his style, calls this to
obtrude an unnecessary piece of frigidity or fustian on Æschylus." The
eader, of course, will judge for himself; but there are many things in our
oet more worthy of the term "fustian" than the word πῆγμα, applied to
οκος.

Note 81 (p. 78). "Implacable breath of curses on her kin."

WELL. forgets his usual caution, when he receives ἄρην into his text, and
jects ἀρὰν, the reading of the MS. It is paltry to object to the phrase

ἄσπονδον ἀρὰν in an author like Æschylus. FRANZ receives the emendat of LOBECK, modified into Ἄρῃ.

Note 82 (p. 80). "Bravely thou praisest; but the happy hear n Such commendations."

I have here, in opposition to FR., SYM., MED., and even the cauti WELL., reverted to the original order of this and the next line, as t appear in the MSS., being chiefly moved by what is said by CON. "T words ἀλλ ἐυκλεῶς τοι καθανεῖν χάρις βροτῷ could never have been put Æschylus into the mouth of Cassandra, who is as far as possible fr cherishing the common view of a glorious death, and, indeed, shows in next speech very plainly what feelings such a thought suggests to her."

Note 83 (p. 80).

"Not with vain screaming, like a fluttering bird."

"Fearing a wild beast about its nest," says the Scholiast; fearing fowler with "its limed wings," says MED. The original is short obscure; but there is no need of being definite; nothing is more comm than to see a bird fruitlessly fluttering about a bush, and uttering pite cries. A fit image of vain lamentation without purpose or result.

Note 84 (p. 81). ". . . From bad to worse Our changes run, and with the worst we end.

This translation is free, because it did not occur to me that the lacon of the Greek, if literally translated, would be sufficiently intelligible. have no doubt as to the correctness of this version of a passage whic certainly not a little puzzling at first sight. Two phases of human life spoken of in the previous lines; one is the change from prosperity adversity, the other, from adversity down to utter ruin and death. preference expressed in the line καὶ ταῦτ ἐκείνων κ.τ.λ. can refer to noth but these two. So PEILE and CON.; and there is a terrible darknes despair about Cassandra's whole tone and manner, which renders account of human life peculiarly natural in her parting words.

Note 85 (p. 81). "Who of mortals will not pray."

The line τίς ἂν ἔυξαιτο βροτῶν ἀσινεῖ, being deficient in metre, one either supply ὄυκ, with CANTER., which gives the meaning expressed in text, or, retaining the affirmative form, read βροτός, ὤν, with BOTH. and which gives an equally good sense thus—

"Who of mortals then may hope
To live an unharmed life, when he
Fell from such height of honor?"

so POT., MED., HUMB., DROYS., FR., and VOSS.

Note 86 (p. 81).

"Weave we counsel now together, and concert a sure design."

I follow MÜLLER here in dividing the Chorus among twelve, not fif speakers. The internal evidence plainly points to this; and for any exte evidence of scholiasts and others in such matters, even if it were un tradicted, I must confess that I think it is worth very little.

Note 87 (p. 82). "So wisely spoken."

Most lame and impotent conclusion!—so the reader has no doubt been all
he while exclaiming. Our great poet has here contrived to make one of the
ost tragic moments of the play consummately ridiculous; and it is in vain
o defend him. No doubt, old men are apt enough to be irresolute, and to
eliberate, while the decisive moment for action slips through their fingers.
o far in character. But why does the poet bring this vacillation so
boriously forward, that it necessarily appears ludicrous? This formal
gumentation turns the character of the Chorus into caricature. Nor will
do to say with Con. that this impotent scene was "forced on Æschylus,
y the fact of the existence of a Chorus, and the nature of the work he had
o do." A short lyrical ode might have covered worthily that irresolution,
hich a formal argumentation only exposes. No one blames the Chorus for
oing nothing; that is all right enough; but every one must blame the poet
r making them talk with such a show of solemn gravity and earnest loyalty
bout doing nothing.

Note 88 (p. 82). "Here, where I struck, I take my rooted stand
Upon the finished deed."

The natural attitude of decision. So when Brutus administered the
mous oath to the Roman people, "*neminem Romæ regnare passuros*," he
nd his colleagues are described by Dionysius (V. 1) as *στάντες ἐπι των*
ημίων.

Note 89 (p. 83). "Thou hast cast off: thou hast cut off
Thine own husband."

I have endeavoured to express the repetition of the *off* three times as in
e original; but the Greek is far more emphatic, the repetition taking place
the same line, *ἀπέδικες, ἀπέταρες ἀπόπολις δ ἔση*.

Note 90 (p. 83). "But mark my words."

There is much difficulty in settling the reading and the construction of the
reek here; but having compared all the translations, I find that, from Pot.
own to Med. and Fr., substantially the same sentiment is educed. Sym.
ho praises Blom.'s arrangement, gives—

> "Threaten away, for I too am prepared
> In the like manner. Rule me if thou canst,
> Get by thy hand the mastery—rule me then.
> But if," etc.

Well. whom I follow, and who objects to Blom.'s construction, gives—

> "Jubeo antem te, quum et ego ad similes minas paratas sim, victoria vi reportata, mihi
> perare; sin minus, et si contraria Dii perfecerint, damno edoctus sero sapere disces."

Note 91 (p. 84). "And thine eyes with fatness swell."

I do not know whether I may not have gone too far in retaining the
riginal force of *λίπος* in this passage. I perceive that few of the translators,
ot even Sew., so curious in etymological translation, keep me in counten-
nce. However, I am always very loath to smooth down a strong phrase in
Eschylus, merely because the modern ear may think it gross. In this case,
am glad to find that I am supported by Droys.

> "Ueber dem Auge glänzt fett Dir das Tropfenblüt,"

hough my rendering is a little more free.

Note 92 (p. 84).

STROPHE I. In the arrangement of the following lyric dialogue, I ha
followed BUT., BLOM., and PEILE, in opposition to that given by HER
WELL., and FR., not for any metrical reasons sufficiently strong to influe
me either one way or other in constituting the text; but because I find
sense complete and continuous after *νῦν δε τελειάν*, and this alone is a sufficie
reason why I, in my subordinate function of a translator, should not supp
anything to have fallen out of the text in this place. How much, howev
we are all in the dark about the matter appears from this, that in the pla
where BLOM. and PEILE suppose an immense *lacuna*, the sense in the mou
of Clytemnestra *νῦν δ' ὥρθωσας* runs on with a continuous allusion to the p
ceding words of the Chorus. For which reason I have not hinted the existe
of an omission, nor is it at all likely that the reader has lost much. Th
are matters which belonged to the ancient symmetrical arrangement of
Chorus before the eyes and ears of the spectators, and which I much fea
it impossible for us, readers of a dry MS., to revive at this time of day.

Note 93 (p. 85). "O god that o'er the doomed Atridan halls."

I am afraid I stand alone, among the translators, in translating *δαίμον*
this and similar places, by the English word *god*; but persuaded as I am t
the English words *Fiend* and *Demon* are steeped in modern partly Goth
partly Christian associations of a character essentially opposed to the char
ter and genius of the Greek theology, I choose rather to offend the ta
than to confound the judgment of my reader in so important a matter. T
Greeks habitually attributed to their *gods* actions and sentiments, which
attribute only to devils and demons. Such beings (in the English sen
were, in fact, altogether unknown to the Greeks. Their gods, as occas
required, performed all the functions of our Devil; so that, to use a famil
illustration, instead of the phrase, *what the devil are you about?* so famil
to a genuine English ear, the Athenians would have said, *what the god*
you about? Hence the use of *δαιμόνιε* in Homer.

Note 94 (p. 86). "The unrelenting old Alastor."

Along with SYM. and CON. I retain the Greek word here, partly from
reason given in the previous note with regard to *δαίμων*, partly because
word is familiar to many poetical ears from Shelley's poetry, partly, al
because I take care so to explain it in the context, that it cannot be misund
stood by the English reader. The Greek word *ἀλάστωρ* means an
genius. Clement of Alexandria, in a passage quoted by SYM. (Protr
c. II.) classes the Alastors of the ancient tragedy with the Furies and ot
terrible ministers of heaven's avenging justice. About the etymology of
word the lexicographers and critics are not agreed. Would there be
harm in connecting it with *ἀλαστέω* (Il. XII. 163), and *ἐπαλαστέω* (Odys.
252), so that it should signify *an angry or wrathful spirit*.

Note 95 (p. 88). "Falling he fell, and dying died."

I have here taken advantage of a Hebraism familiar, through the pa
of the Bible, to the English ear, in order to give somewhat of the force
the fine alliteration in the original *κάπεσε, κάτθανε .καὶ καταθάψομεν*.
the next three lines I have filled up a blank in the text, by what m
obviously have been the import of the lost lines, if, indeed, PALEY, KLAUS
and CON. are not rather right in not insisting on an exact response of sta
to stanza in the anapæstic systems of the musical dialogue.

Note 96 (p. 88). "While great Jove lives.'

μίμνοντος ἐν χρόνῳ Διὸς. "The meaning is sufficiently plain, if we do not disturb it by any philosophical notions about the difference between time and eternity."—Con. The reader will note here the grand idea of retributive justice pursuing a devoted family from generation to generation, and, as it were, entailing misery upon them, concerning which see Sewell's remarks above, p. 349. Sophocles strikes the same keynote in the choric chaunt of the Antigone, *ἀρχαῖα τα Δαβδακιδᾶν δικων ὀρῶμαι.*

Note 97 (p. 90). ". . . in a separate dish concealed
Were legs and arms, and the fingers' pointed tips."

Editors have a great difficulty in settling the text here; but there is enough of the meaning visible—especially when the passage is compared with Herod. I. 119, referred to by Schütz—to enable the translator to proceed on the assumption of a text substantially the same as that given by Fr., where the second line is supplied—

Τὰ μὲν ποδήρη και χέρων ἄκρους κτένας
[Ἔθετο κάτωθεν πάντα συγκρύψας τὰ δ ἀν]
Ἔθρυπτ ἄνωθεν ἀνδρακὰς καθημένοις
Ἄσήμ' · ὁ δ ἄυτῶν ἀντικ' αγνόιᾳ λαβὼν.

The reader will observe that in these and such like passages, where, after all the labours of the learned, an uncertainty hangs over the text, I think myself safer in giving only the general undoubted meaning that shines through the passage, without venturing on the slippery ground of translating words of which the proper connection may he lost, or which, perhaps, were not written at all by the poet.

Note 98 (p. 90). ". . . while with his heel he spurned
The supper."

I quite agree with Con. that there is not the slightest reason for rejecting the natural meaning of *λακτίσμα δείπνου* in this passage. Such expressions are quite Æschylean in their character, and the analogy of the feast of Tereus in Ovid, Met. VI. 661,

"Thracius ingenti mensas clamore repellit,"

adduced by Con. is very happy. To push the table away, whether with hand or heel, or with both, in such a case, is the most natural action in the world.

Note 99 (p. 90). "And no diviner vends more potent balms
To drug a doting wit."

I have here expanded the text a little, to express the whole force of the Greek word *Ἰατρομάντεις*, concerning which see Note to the Eumen. v. 62, below.

Note 100 (p. 91). "Ho! my gallant co-mates, rouse ye!"

These two lines in the mouth of the Chorus make a good consecutive sense; but the symmetrical response of line to line, so characteristic of Greek tragedy, has led Herm., Well., and the other editors of note, to suppose that a line from Ægisthus has fallen out between these lines of the Chorus. Blanks of this kind, however, the translator will wisely overlook, so long as they do not seriously disturb the sense.

NOTES TO THE CHOEPHORÆ

Note 1 (p. 99). "What power thy father lent."

Jove was regarded as the grand source of the power exercised by all other gods, even Apollo receiving the gift of prophecy from him. There a peculiar propriety in the allusion to the father Zeus, as Mercury is quested to perform the same office of *σωτήρ* or Saviour to Orestes that Jo in a peculiar manner performs to all mankind.—See MÜLLER on *Zeus Sot* (Eumenides, § 94), whose observations, however, on this particular passa seem to force an artificial accent on the epithet *σώτηρ*. The opening li of this piece are wanting in the MSS. and were supplied by STAN. from Frogs of Aristophanes.

Note 2 (p. 99). "* * My early growth of hair
To Inachus I vowed."

These words will recall to the student of Homer a passage from twenty-third book of the Iliad, where an account is given of the fune ceremonies of Patroclus.

> "First the horsemen came, and then a cloud of infantry behind,
> Tens of thousands; his companions bore Patroclus in the midst,
> And the corpse they sadly covered with the locks which grief had shorn."
>
> v. 133-5

And again—

> "Then another deed devised Achilles, godlike, swift of foot;
> Stationed sad behind the pyre he clipt his locks of yellow hair,
> Which, luxuriant shed, he cherished to Spercheius' flowing stream."
>
> v. 140-3

Compare the beautiful passage on the Greek mythology in Wordswort Excursion, Book IV.

Note 3 (p. 99). "O Jove, be thou mine aid."

Of the high functions which belong to the supreme god of the Gree that of *avenger* is not the least notable, and is alluded to with special f quency in the Odyssey, of which poem, *retribution in this life for wic works* is the great moral—whence the frequent line—

ἀι κε πόθι Ζεὺς δῶσι παλίντιτα ἔργα γενέσθαι.

Note 4 (p. 99). "And my cheeks, that herald sorrow."

"As these violent manifestations of grief were forbidden by Sol (Plut. 21), we are to look upon them in this place as peculiarly characteris of the foreign captive maidens who compose the chorus"—KL.; though t epithet of *ἀμφιδρυφὴς ἄλοχος* applied to the wife of Protesilaus by Hom (Il. ii. 700, xi. 393), shows that, in the heroic times, at least, the expressi of sorrow was almost as violent on the west as on the east side of t Hellespont.

Note 5 (p. 101). "And now fear rules."

φοβεῖται δέ τις. "*People are afraid, and dare not speak out*"—PEIL The abruptness of this passage renders it difficult to see the allusion. PAL

ives it quite a different turn. "*Sunt qui ob commissi sceleris quo adepti int magnam fortunam* (το ἐυτυχὲἶν) *conscientiam torqueantur.*" But I do not hink that this rendering agrees so well with the words that follow. The hought seems to be—*the world judges by results; and men are content, even n fear, to obey a usurper, who shows his right by his success.* This brings ut a beautiful contrast to the *σέβας*, or feeling of loyal reverence that filled he public mind towards Agamemnon, who is alluded to in the first words f the Antistrophe.

Note 6 (p. 101). "So filthy hands with blood bedabbled."

I do not see why WELL. and KL. should object to *πόροι* being taken, as he Scholiast hints, for an equivalent to *ποταμοὶ*. The word simply means '*channels*," and in the present connection of purification would naturally xplain itself to a Greek ear, as *channels of water*. KL.'s rendering of *πόρος, ratio expiandae caedis*, has no merit but being unpoetical. The *οὖσαν ἄτην* holds concealed some hopeless blunder; but for the need the *λύσειαν ἀν μάτην* of FR. may be adopted.

Note 7 (p. 101). "What the masters of my fate
In their strength decree."

"There is a proverb, *Δοῦλε δεσποτῶν ἄκουε καὶ δίκαια καὶ ἀδικα. Slave hear thy master whether right or wrong.*"—SCHOLIAST.

Note 8 (p. 101). ". . . beneath the veil."

ὑφ ἑιμάτων. STAN. quotes the beautiful picture of Telemachus (Odyssey IV. 114), endeavouring to conceal his filial sorrow from the eyes of Menelaus at Sparta—

"From his eye the tear-drop fell when he heard his father's name,
And with both his hands before his eyes he held the purple cloak."

Note 9 (p. 102). ". . . libations pure,
Poured on my father's tomb."

These libations are described in various passages of the Classics, of which the following may suffice :—

"Then to all the dead I poured libations, first with honied milk,
Then with sweetest wine, and then with water, and I strewed the grains
Of whitest meal."—ODYSSEY XI. 26.

"Go, my Hermione, without the door,
And these libations take, and take my hair,
And, standing over Clytemnestra's tomb,
Milk-mingled honey and the winy foam
Pour, and thus speak."—EURIP., Orest. 112.

"And with the due libation's triple flow
She crowns the corpse."—SOPH. ANTIG., 429.

The *χοᾶισι πρισπόνδαισι*, being the *wine, water*, and *milk*, particularised in the above extract from Homer. Compare Virgil's Æn. V. 78, and St. Augustine's Confessions vi. 2, with regard to his mother's offering at the tombs of the martyrs—*pultes et panem et merum.*

Note 10 (p. 102). ". . . as who throws lustral ashes."

καθάρματα. "Ashes of lustral offerings"—PEILE. "Alluding to the custom of the Athenians, who, after purifying their houses with incense in an earthen vessel, threw the vessel into the streets, and retired with averted eyes."—SCHOLIAST.

Note 11 (p. 102). "What other quittance to a foe
Than hate repaid with hate, and blow with blow?"

Why not? *πῶς δ'ου*; how should it be otherwise? Observe, here, ho far the Christian rule, *love thine enemies*, was from the Heathen mind. is very far yet from our practice; though it is difficult to over-estimate t value of having such ideal moral maxims as those of the New Testament refer to as a generally recognized standard.

Note 12 (p. 103).

"Hermes, that swayest underneath the ground."

All the recent editors agree in bringing up the line—

κήρυξ μέγιστε των άνω τε και κάτω,

from v. 162 to this place, where the initial words are plainly wantin "Hermes is invoked here as the great mediator between the living and t dead."—KL. "*Herald me in this*"—*κηρύξας 'εμοι—perform a herald function to me in this;* the verb chosen with special reference to the nam *κήρυξ*, according to the common practice of the Greek writers. In t second line below, I can have no hesitation in adopting STAN.'s emendati of *ὀωμάτων* for *ομμάτων*. AHRENS (in FR.) has tried to make the passa more pregnant by reading *ἀιμάτων*, but this scarcely seems such an obvio emendation.

Note 13 (p. 103). "These words of evil imprecation dire."

This is said to avoid the bad omen of mingling a curse with a blessin The ancients were very scrupulous as to the use of evil words in religio services, and, when such were either necessary, or had accidentally crept i they always made a formal apology. This I have expressed more large than my text warrants in the next line, where I follow SCHÜTZ reading *καλῆς* for *κακῆς*; a correction which, though not absolutely necessar is sufficiently plausible to justify BLOM., SCHOL., and PAL. in their adopti of it.

Note 14 (p. 103).

Chorus. This chorus seems hopelessly botched in the first half, and the attempts to mend it are more or less unsatisfactory. If any one thi "plashing torrents" a strong phrase, he must know that it is no strong than *καναχὲς* in the original, a word familiar to every student of Hom The *ἐρυμα* (or *ἐρμα*—HERM.), I agree with every interpreter, except Klause in applying to the tomb of Agamemnon; of the *κακῶν κεδνῶν τε*, I can ma nothing, beyond incorporating the Scholiast's gloss, *ἀπότροπον των ἡμετέρ κακῶν.*

Note 15 (p. 104).

Electra. The reader will find in POT. a somewhat amplified transl tion of the line here—

κήρυξ μεγιστε των άνω τε και κάτω,

mentioned above as having been thrown back by Hermann to the co mencement of Electra's address over the tomb of her father, immediate preceding the short choral ode. It is literally translated by E. P., Oxon.—

"O mightiest herald of the powers above and below,"

but comes in quite awkwardly, and manifestly out of place.

Note 16 (p. 104). ". . . a low-zoned maid's."

βαθυζώνου. "High-bosomed," POTTER; "hochgeschürzt," DROYSEN; "deep-bosomed," E. P., Oxon.; "Weib im Festgewand," FRANZ. Not having a distinct idea of what is meant by this epithet, I have contented myself with a literal rendering.

Note 17 (p. 104). "If it was clipt
From head in Argos, it should be my own."

This passage has given great trouble to commentators, who cannot see how Electra should say that no person but herself could have owned this lock, which yet she knew was not her own. They have, accordingly, at least LIN., PEILE, and PAL., adopted DOBREES' emendation of *ἑνος* (one person, *i.e.*, *Orestes*), instead of *ἐμου*, mine, which, though ingenious, does not appear to me at all necessary. Electra means to say, *nobody here could have done it but me; and yet it is not mine* (this implied); *therefore, of course, the conclusion to be made is clear, ἐυξύμβολον τὸδ ἐστι δοξάσαι, it must have been Orestes!*

Note 18 (p. 105). ". . . But lo! a further proof."

Imagine such evidence produced as a step in the chain of circumstantial evidence before a court of justice! Even the perturbed state of Electra's mind may not redeem it from the charge of being grossly ludicrous. WELL. and FR., with that solemn conscientious gravity for which the Germans are notable, have, however, taken it under their wing, followed here, strangely enough, by PEILE. If the circumstance is to be defended at all, we had better suppose that Æschylus has given the details of the recognition exactly as he had received them from the old popular legend in the mouth of some story-teller. But why should not the father of tragedy, as well as the father of Epos, sometimes nod?

Note 19 (p. 105).

"Pray that fair end may fair beginning follow."

This seems to have been a sort of proverbial prayer among the Greeks, used for the sake of a good omen, as we find Clytemnestra, in the Agamemnon (p. 57 above), saying the same thing.

Εὐ γὰρ πρὸς ἐυ φανεῖσι προσθήκη πελοι. v. 486.

Note 20 (p. 106). ". . . behold this web."

"The ladies, in the simplicity of ancient times, valued themselves much, and, indeed, were highly esteemed, for their skill in embroidery; those rich wrought vests made great part of the wealth of noble houses. Andromache, Helen, and Penelope, were celebrated for their fine work, of which Minerva herself was the patroness, and Dido was as excellent as the best of them." —POT. The student will recall a familiar instance from Virgil—

> "Munera praetrea Iliacis erepta ruinis
> Ferre jubet; pallam signis auroque rigentem
> Et circumtextum croceo velamen acantho
> Ornatus Argivae Helenæ."—ÆNEID I. 651.

evidently modelled on Odys. xix. 225.

Note 21 (p. 106).

"May Power and Justice aid thee, mighty Twain."

The reader will note this theological triad as very characteristic of t Greeks. POWER (*Κράτος*) is coupled with Jove, as being his most peculi physical attribute. Personified, this attribute appears in the Prometheu and in Homer,

"Jove, the lofty-pealing Thunderer, and in power the chiefest god,"

answers to the opening words of our own solemn addresses to the Supren Being—ALMIGHTY GOD. JUSTICE, again, belongs to Jove as the highe moral attribute; and this conjunction we find also very distinctly express in Homer.

"By Olympian Jove I charge you, and by Themis who presides
O'er the assemblies of the people."—ODYSSEY II. 68.

Note 22 (p. 107). ". . . exasperate at the loss
Of my so fair possessions."

ἀποχρημάτοισι ζημιάις ταυρούμενον. KL. has made sad havoc of th line; but his objections to the old translation are weak, and his transpos tions, so far as I can see, only make confusion more confounded. I stick STAN. *'Αποχρήματος ζημιά* est *damnum bonorum omnium.* Huc facit illu quod sequitur v. 299. *και προσπιέζει χρημάτων ἀχηνία.*

Note 23 (p. 107). ". . . The evil-minded Powers
Beneath the Earth."

I am quite at a loss to explain the original of this passage further tha that I see nothing harsh (as LIN. does) in referring the general ter *δυσφρόνων* to the Furies, who are specially mentioned afterwards. It quite common with Æschylus to give a general description first, and th specialise; and, moreover, in the present instance the *λιχήνος* which t *δυσφρονες* are to send on the flesh of the sinner, are strictly analogous to t *λιχὴν ἀφυλλος* (Eumen. v. 788), with which, in the Eumenides, they threat to curse the Athenian soil. For the rest I should have little objection, the present state of the MSS., to adopt LOBECK's suggestion, *μηνίματα*, in the text, and have in effect so translated.

Note 24 (p. 107).

"And through the dark his prescient eyebrow arched."

The reference of this impracticable line to Apollo comes from Pauw, a has been adopted by SCHWENCK, who reads—

'Ορῶν τε λαμπρὸν ἐν σκότῳ νωμῶν τ' 'οφρὺν.

Another way of squeezing a meaning from the line is to refer it to Agamen non—

"With trains of heavier woes
Raised by the Furies from my father's blood,
Who in the realms of night sees this, and bends
His gloomy brows."—POT.

The other translations proposed are meagre and unpoetical.

Note 25 (p. 107). ". . . him no share
In festal cup awaits, or hallowed drop
Of pure libation."

Here we have a notable example of the terms of that sort of excommunication which the religious and social feeling of the ancients passed against the perpetrators of atrocious crimes. See Introductory Remarks to the Eumenides.

Note 26 (p. 108). "Age to age with hoary wisdom
Speaketh thus to men."

The old Jewish maxim of *an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*, will here recur to every one; and, indeed, it is, to the present day, an instinctive dictate of social justice, however insufficient it may be as a general motive for individual conduct. In this spirit, wise old Nestor, in the Iliad (II. 354), considers that it would be disgraceful for the Greeks to think of returning home "before some Greek had slept with the wife of some Trojan," as a retaliation for the woes that Paris had inflicted on Greek social life, in the matter of Helen. In Dante's Inferno there are many instances, sometimes ingenious, sometimes only ridiculous, of the application of this principle to retributive punishment in a future life.

Note 27 (p. 108).

"There where in dark, the dead-man's day, thou liest."

Kl. appears to me to have supplied the true key to *σκότω φάος 'ισόμοιρον*, by comparing the exclamation of Ajax in Sophocles, v. 394—

Ιω σκότος 'εμὸν φάος
"ερεβος ὡ φαεννότατον ὡς εμόι!

The gloomy state of the dead in Hades is pictured yet more darkly, by saying that the night, which covers them, is all that serves them for day.

Note 28 (p. 109). "The monarch of the awful dead."

The Hades of the ancients was, as is well remarked by Kl. on this place, in all things an image of this upper world; an observation to be made on the surface of Virgil—

"Quae gratia currum
Armorumque fuit viris, quæ cura nitentes
Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos."
ÆNEID VI. 653.

But the parallel most striking to the present passage occurs in the address of Ulysses to Achilles, Odyssey XI. 482—

"Achilles,
Never man before was happier, nor shall ever be, than thou;
When thou wert among the living all the Argives honoured thee
Like a god, and now amid the dead thou sway'st with mighty power."

To which address the hero gave the well-known reply, a reply characteristic at once of his own tremendous energy, and of the Greek views of a future state:—

"Noble Ulysses, praise me not the state of death; for I would rather
Be a serf, and break the clods to him that owneth acres few
On Earth, than reign the mighty lord of millions of the shadowy dead.'

Note 29 (p. 110). "Hyperborean bliss."

"Fair birds have fair feathers;" so the Greeks, who had sent no voyages of discovery to the Arctic seas, were free, without contradiction, to place Utopia at the North Pole. (See Herodot. III. 106, quoted by *Nitzsh* in his comments on the Phœacians, Od. VII. 201–6.) Schütz quotes Pomp. Mela. III. 5—"*diutius quam ulli mortalium et beatius vivunt.*" Some of

these Hyperboreans drank nothing but milk (γαλακτοφάγοι, Hom. XIII. 6), and from this practice the alleged purity of their manners, accor ing to certain modern theories of dietetics, may have arisen.

Note 30 (p. 110). "O Jove, O Jove! that sendest from below."

"Zeus, though his proper region is above, yet, by reason of his perfe concord with his brother in the moral government of the world, exercis authority also in Hades"—KL. This is one of the many instances to found in Homer and Æschylus of the Monotheistic principle of enlightened Deism controlling and overruling the apparent confusion a anarchy of Polytheism.

Note 31 (p. 111). "Ye that honoured reign below."

What the true reading of the corrupt original here is, no one can kno but it may be some satisfaction to the student to note that the differe readings of all the emendators bring out substantially the same sense. give the various translations as follows :—

You, whose dreaded power
The infernal realms revere, ye Furies, hear me!—POT.

O ye powers that are honoured among the dead, listen to my prayer.—E. P., Oxon.

Höret ihr Herrscher der Tiefe, hört mich.—DROY.

Höret mich Erd, und des Abgrund's mächte!—FR.

Neither this "Earth," nor my "Furies," can be looked on as part of t text. They are only put in to fill up a gap, where nothing better can done.

Note 32 (p. 111). "And if blithe confidence awhile."

This passage is desperate. I follow PEILE in the translation; though, I were editing the Greek, I should prefer to follow WELL. and PAL. in doi nothing.

Note 33 (p. 111). "The mother gave her child
This wolfish nature wild."

This translation, which is supported by PEILE, and PAL., and LI seems to me to give θυμὸς that reference to Orestes which connects it b with the previous lines, while it, at the same time, gives the least forc explanation of 'εκ μάτρος.

Note 34 (p. 112). "Like a Persian mourner."

The student will find a very remarkable difference between this versi and that in POT. and E. P. Oxon., arising from the conversion of the wo πολεμιστρίας into 'ιηλεμιστρίας, a conjectural emendation which we owe HERMANN and AHRENS, and which appears to me to be one of the m satisfactory that has ever been made on the text of Æschylus. It h accordingly, been adopted by KL., PEILE, PAL., FR., and DROY. T oriental wailers were famous, and the "Maryandine and Mysian wailer are especially mentioned by our poet in the final chorus of "the Persians which will be the best commentary on the exaggerated tone of the prese passage. I have followed the recent German editors and translators giving the first part of this Strophe to the Chorus. There seems to be natural division at the words 'Ιὼ, 'Ιὼ δαία.

Note 35 (p. 112).

Orestes. WELL. has certainly made a great oversight in running on continuously with these two Strophes. However the division be made, a new person must commence with Λέγεις πατρῴων μόρων.

Note 36 (p. 113).

Chorus. Here again I follow the later editors and translators in dividing the part given to the Chorus by WELL. There is a sort of natural partition of the style and sentiment palpable to any reader. It may also be remarked in general, that the broken and exclamatory style of the lamentation in this Chorus is quite incompatible with long continuous speeches (such as POT. has given), out of one mouth. The order of persons I give as in PEILE.

Note 37 (p. 114). "Scathless myself."

φυγεῖν. FR. has unnecessarily changed this into τυχεῖν. In Odyssey XX. 43, Ulysses uses the same language to Athena.

Note 38 (p. 114). "Thou too shalt taste."

That the dead were believed actually to eat the meat and drink that was prepared for them at the funeral feast is evident from the eleventh book of the Odyssey, where they come up in fluttering swarms and sip the pool of blood from the victim which he had sacrificed.

Note 39 (p. 115). "Well spoken both."

With KL., PEILE, FR., and PAL., I adopt Hermann's emendation—

καὶ μὴν ἀμεμφῆ τον δ ἐτείνατον λόγον.

and with him give the four lines to the Chorus. A very obvious and natural sense is thus brought out, besides that καὶ μὴν naturally indicates a change of person.

Note 40 (p. 115).

". . . try what speed the gods may give thee."

δαίμονος πειρώμενος. Literally *trying your god*—the dependence of fortune upon God being a truth so vividly before the Greek mind that the term δαίμων came to be used for both in a manner quite foreign to the use of the English language, and which can only be fully expressed by giving both the elements of the word in a sort of paraphrase.

Note 41 (p. 116). ". . . this whole house with ills
Is sheer possessed."

δαιμονᾷ δόμος κακοῖς. Literally, "the house is *godded* with ills," that is, so beset with evil that we can attribute it only to a special superhuman power—to a god, as the Greeks expressed it, to the devil, as we say.

Note 42 (p. 116). ". . . Sirs, why dare ye shut
Inhospitable doors against the stranger?"

To shut the door upon a stranger or a beggar, seems, in Homer's days, to have been accounted as great a sin, as it is now, from change of circumstances, necessarily looked on as almost a virtue. Every book of the Odyssey has some testimony to this; suffice it to quote the maxim—

"προς γαρ Διος εἰσιν ἅπαντες
ξεινοί τε πτωχοί τε."

"ALL STRANGERS AND BEGGARS COME FROM JOVE."

Note 43 (p. 116). "The third and crowning cup.

"Alluding first to the slaughter of the children of Thyestes by Atreu then to the murder of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra, and thirdly, that Clytemnestra and Ægisthus presently to take place."—KL.

Note 44 (p. 116). ". . . his present aid I ask."
Who laid on my poor wits this bloody task."

I am inclined with SCHÜTZ, KL., and PEILE, to think that there is mo propriety in referring this to Apollo than to Pylades. It is true, also, SCHÜTZ remarks, that Æschylus generally, if not invariably, applies th word ἐποπτεύω to the notice taken of anything by a god.

Note 45 (p. 117). "Earth breeds a fearful progeny."

The sentiment of this chorus was familiar to the ancients, and was sug gested with peculiar force to the minds of the tragedians, from the co templation of those terrible deeds of old traditionary crime, which so ofte formed the subject of their most popular and most powerful efforts. Sophocl had a famous chorus in the Antigone, beginning in the same strain, thoug ranging over a wider and a more ennobling field—"πολλὰ τα δεινὰ κ'ουδ ανθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει."

"Things of might hath Nature many
In her various plan,
But of daring powers who dareth
Most on Earth is man."

In imitation of which, the

"Audax omnia perpeti
Gens humana ruit in vetitum nefas"

of Horace has become proverbial. In modern times, the pages of the *Time* newspaper will supply more ample and various illustrations of the same grea truth than the most learned ancient could have collected. In Englan especially, the strong nature of the Saxon shows something Titanic, both i feats of mechanical enterprise and in crime.

Note 46 (p. 117). "All-venturing woman's dreadful ire."

KL. quotes here the Homeric

ὡς ὀυκ ἀνότερον και κύντερον ἀλλο γυναικὸς.

"Woman like a dog unblushing deeds of terrible name will do."

So a friend who was in Paris, at the time of the Revolution in 1848, wro to me—"With the men I can easily manage, but *the women are tigers.*"

Note 47 (p. 117). "Thestios' daughter, wild with rage."

Althea, the mother of the famous Calydonian boar-hunter, Meleage who is so often seen on the sides of ancient sarcophagi. "When Meleage was seven days old, it is said the Fates appeared, declaring that the bo would die, as soon as the piece of wood that was burning on the heart should be consumed. When Althea heard this, she extinguished the fire brand, and concealed it in a chest. Meleager himself became invulnerable

but when—in the war between the Calydonians and the Curetes—he had unfortunately killed his mother's brother, she lighted the piece of wood, and Meleager died."—*Dict. Biog.*

Note 48 (p. 117). "How Scylla, gay, in gold arrayed."

The daughter of Nisus, king of Megara, who, when Minos, in his expedition against Athens, took Megara, betrayed the city to the enemy, by cutting off the purple or golden hair which grew on the top of her father's head, and on which his life and the preservation of the city depended.—*Dict. Biog.; voce* NISUS, and Virgil Georg. I. 404, and Ovid. Met. VIII. 90, quoted here by STAN.

Note 49 (p. 118). "O woman! woman! Lemnos saw."

The Lemnian women, as Apollodorus relates (I. 9, 17), having neglected to pay due honor to Venus, were, by that goddess, made so ill-favoured and intolerable to consort with (*ἀνταῖς ἐμβάλλῃ δοσοσμίαν*), that their husbands, abandoning them, took themselves other wives from among the captive women that they had brought over from Thrace. The Lemnian women, in revenge, murdered both their fathers and their husbands; from which atrocious act, and another bloody deed mentioned by Herodotus (VI. 138), "it hath been the custom," says the historian, "to call by the name Lemnian any monstrous and inhuman action."

Note 50 (p. 118). "And honor from the threshold hies,
On which the doom god-spoken lies."

We are not always sufficiently alive to the deep moral power which lay concealed beneath the harlequin dress of the old Greek Polytheism. What Æschylus puts into the mouth of a theatrical chorus in sounding rhythm, Xenophon, in plain prose, teaches from the mouth of a Greek captain thus—"Whosoever violates an oath to which the gods are witness, him I can never be brought to look on as a happy man. For, when the gods are once hostile, no one can escape their anger—not by hiding himself in darkness—not by fencing himself within a strong place. For all things are subject to the gods."—*Anab.* II. 5. Think on some of the Psalms!

Note 51 (p. 119). "But nice regard for the fine feeling ear."

I have here with a certain freedom of version expressed KL.'s idea, that the preference expressed by Orestes for a male ear to receive his message arose from the nature of his news; but I do not think it is "inept" to believe, with BL. and PEILE, that we have here merely an instance of the general secluded state in which Greek women lived, so that it was esteemed not proper to talk with them, in public—as Achilles says, in Euripides—

αἰσχρὸν δέ μοὶ γυναιξὶν συμβάλλειν λόγους.

"For me to hold exchange of words with women
Were most improper."—IPHIG. AULID. 830.

Note 52 (p. 119). "Hot baths."

To an English ear this sounds more like the apparatus of modern luxury than the accompaniment of travel in the stout heroic times. It is a fact, however, as KL. well notes, that of nothing is there more frequent mention in Homer than of warm baths. This is especially frequent in the Odyssey,

where so many journeys are made. Telemachus, for instance, at Pylus, washed by the beautiful Polycaste, the youngest daughter of his venerab host; and the poet records with pleasure how "out of the bath he came i appearance like to the immortal gods" (III. 468), a verse which might serv as a very suitable motto to a modern work on Hydropathy.

Note 53 (p. 119).

Electra. WELL. is very imperative in taking these words out of Electra mouth, and giving them to some other person, he does not exactly kno who; but, though she left the stage before, there is no reason why she shoul not come back; and, in fact, she is just doing what she ought to do i appearing here, and carrying on the deception.

Note 54 (p. 120). "Is audited at nothing."

The passage is corrupt. I read *παρ' ὀυδέν*, with Blomfield. 'Tis cer tainly difficult to say whether *βακχείας καλης* should be made to depend o *ἐλπὶς*, as I have made it, or being changed into *κακης*, be referred to Clytem nestra.

Note 55 (p. 120). ". . . suasive wile, and smooth deceit!"

The reader need hardly be reminded that these qualities, so necessary t the present transaction, render the invocation (in the next line) peculiarl necessary of the god, who was the recognised patron of thieves, and o whom the Roman lyrist, in a well-known ode sings—

> "Te boves olim nisi reddidisses
> Per dolum amotas puerum minaci
> Voce dum terret, viduus pharetra
> Risit Apollo."

Note 56 (p. 120). "The nightly courier of the dead."

τὸν νύχιον. That there is a great propriety in the epithet *nightly*, a applied to Mercury, both in respect of his general function as *πομπαῖος*, o leader of the dead through the realms of night, and in respect of th particular business now in hand, and the particular time of the action, i obvious. In spite of some grammatical objections, therefore, I cannot bu think it far-fetched in BLOM. and PEILE to refer the epithet to Orestes Were I editing the text I should be very much inclined to follow HERM. an PAL. in putting *καὶ τὸν νύχιον* within brackets, as perhaps a gloss.

Note 57 (p. 122). "The bearer of a tale can make it wear What face he pleases."

I translate thus generally, in order to avoid the necessity of settling th point whether *κυπτὸς* or *κρυπτὸς* is the proper reading—a point, however, o little consequence to the translator of Æschylus, as the Venetian Scholias to Il. O. 207 has been triumphantly brought forward to prove the real mean ing of this otherwise corrupt and unintelligible verse. POT. was not in condition to get hold of the true text—so he has given the best version h could of what he had—

> "*For the mind catches from the messenger*
> *A secret elevation and bold swell,*"

evidently from the reading of PAW.—

'εν ἀγγελῳ γὰρ κρυπτὸς ὠρθωθη φρενὶ
animo enim clam erigatur nuntio isto.

—See BUTLER's Notes.

Note 58 (p. 122).

CHORAL HYMN. The text of this Chorus is a ruin, with here a pillar and there a pillar, some fragments of a broken cornice, and something like the cell of a god; but the rubbish is so thick, and the excavations so meagre, that perfect recovery of the original scheme is in some places impossible, and restoration in a great measure conjectural. Under these circumstances, with the help of the Commentators (chiefly PEILE and LIN.), I have endeavoured to piece out a connection between the few fragments that are intelligible; but I have been guided throughout more by a sort of poetical instinct than by any philological science, and have allowed myself all manner of liberties, convinced that in this case the most accurate translation is sure to be the worst. In the metre, I follow PEILE.

Note 59 (p. 125). "Let's go aside, the deed being done, that we Seem not partakers of the bloody work."

'Tis a misfortune, arising from having such a body as a Chorus always on the stage, that they are often found to be spectators, where they cannot be partakers of a great work; and thus their attitude as secret sympathisers, afraid to show their real sentiments, becomes on many occasions the very reverse of heroic. This strikes us moderns very strongly, apt as we are, from previous associations, to take the Chorus along with the other characters of the play, and judge it accordingly; but to the Greeks, who felt that the Chorus was there only for the purpose of singing, criticisms of this kind were not likely to occur.

Note 60 (p. 126).

"I nursed thy childhood, and in peace would die."

Clytemnestra says only that she wished to be allowed to spend her old age in peace; but she implies further, according to a natural feeling strongly expressed by Greek writers, that it was the special duty of her son to support her old age, and thus pay the fee of his nursing. Thus, in Homer, it is a constant lament over one who dies young in battle—

"Not to his parents
The nursing fee (*θρέπτρα*) he paid."—IL. IV. 478.

"In general it was accounted a great misfortune by the Greeks to die childless (*ἄπαιδα γηράσκειν*, Eurip. Ion. 621). And at Athens there was a law making it imperative on an heir to afford aliment to his mother."—KLAUSEN.

Note 61 (p. 126). "Thou art a woman sitting in thy chamber."

"Go to thy chamber, mother, and mind the business that suits thee;
Tend the loom and the spindle, and give thy maidens the order
Each to her separate work; but leave the bow and the arrows
To the men and to me—for the man in the house is the master."
ODYSSEY XXI. 350.

So Telemachus says to his mother; and on other occasions he uses what we should think, rather sharp and undutiful language—but in Greece a woman who left the woman's chamber without a special and exceptional call

subjected herself to just rebuke. With regard to the matter here at iss between Orestes and Clytemnestra, KL. notes that, though the wanderi Ulysses is allowed without blame to form an amorous alliance with Calyps the same excuse is not allowed for the female sitting quietly in her "upp chamber" (*ὑπερῴιον*, Il. II. 514) as Homer has it. For "in ancient times says the Scholiast to that passage, "the Greeks shut up their women garrets (*ὑπερ τοῦ δυσεντεύκτους ἀντὰς εἶναι*) *that they might be difficult to a at.*"—How Turkish!

Note 62 (p. 126).

Orestes. I have little doubt that KL., PRILE, FR., WELL., and PA are right in giving the line *ἢ κάρτα μάντις* to Orestes. I should be inclin to agree with WELL. and PAL. also, that after this line a verse has dro out—"*in quo instantem sibi mortem deprecata sit Clytemnestra;*" there is no need of indicating the supposed blank in the translation, as t sense runs on smoothly enough without it.

Note 63 (p. 127). ". . . the eye of this great house, may live."

An Oriental expression, to which the magnificent phraseology of Celestial brother who sells tea, has made the English ear sufficiently famili He calls our king, or our consul, I forget which, "the Barbarian eye Other examples of this style occur in the Persians and the Eumenides. See p. 172 above.

Note 64 (p. 127). "A pair of grim lions, a double Mars terrible.

Klausen, who, like other Germans, has a trick, sometimes, of preferri what is far-fetched to what is obvious, considers that this double Mars is t double death, first of Agamemnon in the previous piece, then of Clyte nestra in this; but notwithstanding what he says, the best comment on t passage is that given by the old Scholiast, when he writes "PYLADES a ORESTES."

Note 65 (p. 127). "Sore chastisement."

ποινὰ. AHRENS, with great boldness, changes this into *Ἐρμᾶς*, whi reading has been rashly thrown into the text by FR. If any spec allusion is needed, I agree with PAL. that Orestes is indicated, who mentioned in the next clause as inflicting the blow, under the guidance celestial Justice.

Note 66 (p. 127).

"Her from his shrine sent the rock-throned Apollo."

In this corrupt passage I adopt HERMANN's correction of *τάν περ τάπέρ.* How much the whole meaning is guesswork, the reader may see, comparing my translation with POT. and the E. P. Oxon., in this pla who follow the old Scholiast in referring *χρονισθεῖσαν* to Clytemnestra.

Note 67 (p. 127).

"And blithely shall welcome them Fortune the fairest."

This passage being very corrupt, is rendered freely. I adopt STAN.'s co jecture *ἰδεῖν ἀκοῦσαι θ' ἱεμενοις*, and suppose *μέτοικοι* to refer to Orestes a Electra.

Note 68 (p. 128). ". . . not
My father, but the Sun that fathers all
With light."

There is a certain mannerism in this description of a thing by the negation of what is similar, to which the tragedians were much addicted. As to the invocation of the sun, see the note in the Prometheus to the speech beginning O divine ether and swift-winged winds.

Note 69 (p. 128). "Or a torpedo, that with biteless touch
Strikes numb who handles."

Literally, *a lamprey*, μύραινα; but to translate so would have been ludicrous; and besides, as BLOM. has noted from Athenaeus, it was not a common lamprey that, in the imagination of the Greeks, was coupled with a viper, but "a sort of monstrous reptile begotten between a viper and a lamprey."

Note 70 (p. 128). "This cloth to wrap the dead."

'Tis difficult to say whether δρόιτη, in this place, means the bath in which Agamemnon was murdered, or the bier on which any dead body is laid after death. KL. supports this latter interpretation. I have incorporated a reference to both versions.

Note 71 (p. 129). "Others 'twixt hope and fear may sway, my fate
Is fixed and scapeless."

I read—

Ἄλλοις ἄν ἐι δή. τουτ' ἄρ διδ ὅπη τελεῖ.

PEILE.

Note 72 (p. 129).

"With soft-wreathed wool, and precatory branch."

These insignia of suppliants are familiar to every reader of the Classics. I shall only recall two of the most familiar intances. In the opening scene of the Iliad the priest of Apollo appears before Agamemnon, and

"In his hand he held the chaplet of the distant-darting Phœbus
On a golden rod."

And in the opening lines of the Œdipus Tyrannus, the old King asks the Chorus—

"Why swarm ye here around the seats of the gods,
With branches furnished such as suppliants bear?"

Note 73 (p. 129). ". . . navel of earth, where burns the flame
Of fire immortal."

As the old astronomers made Earth the centre of the planetary system, and as men are everywhere, and at all times, apt to consider their own position and point of view as of more importance in the great whole of things than it really is; so the Greeks, in their ignorant vanity, considered their own Delphi to be the navel, or central point of Earth. As to the immortal fire, STAN. quotes here from Plutarch, who, in his life of Numa (c. ix.), describing the institution of the Vestal Virgins, takes occasion to mention the sacred fire kept alive in Greece at two places, Delphi and Athens, which, if extinguished, was always rekindled from no earthly spark, but from the Sun.

Note 74 (p. 130). "There is atonement."

Ἔισιν καθαρμοί, SCHÜTZ, PAL.; ἔ σται καθαρμός, BOTHE. Either of these seems preferable to the vulgate ἐισω. FRANZ has Ἔις σοι καθαρμὸς. *Eins bleibt Dir Sühnung.*

Note 75 (p. 130). "Ye see them not. I see them."

Ghosts and gods are never visible to the bystander, but only to the pers or persons who may be under their special influence at the moment of th appearance—so in the Iliad (I. 197), Pallas Athena—

> "There behind him stood, and by the yellow hair she seized Pelides,
> Seen to him alone; the others saw not where the goddess stood."

and so in a thousand places of the poet. To the spectator, however, in t theatre, spiritual beings must be visible, because (as Müller, Eumen. properly remarks) they are the very persons from before whose eyes it is t business of the poet to remove the veil that interposes between our everyc life and the spiritual world. That the Furies of the following piece were se bodily at this part of the present play, and are not supposed to exist mer in the brain of Orestes, is only what a decent regard for common poeti consistency on the part of a great tragic poet seems to imply.

Note 76 (p. 130).

". . . the god whose eyes in love behold thee!"

What god is not said, but the word *θεός* is used indefinitely without t article. The Greeks had an indefinite style when talking of the div providence—*a god*, or *some god*, or *the god*, or *the gods*—a style which ar naturally out of the Polytheistic form of celestial government. Examp of all the different kinds of phraseology are frequent in Homer. Sometim in that author, the expression, though indefinite in itself, has a spec allusion, plain enough from the context; and in the present passage I no harm in supposing an allusion to Apollo, under whose immediate patr age Orestes acts through the whole of this piece and that which follows.

NOTES TO THE EUMENIDES

Note 1 (p. 141). "Old earth, primeval prophetess, I first
With these my prayers invoke ; and Themis next

Earth, or GAEA, as the Greeks name her, is described here, and in Pausanias (X. 5), as the most ancient prophetess of Delphi, for two reasons ; *first*, because out of the earth came those intoxicating fumes or vapours, by the inspiration of which the oracles were given forth (see Diodorus XVI. 26) ; *second*, because, as SCHOEMANN well observes, GAEA, as the aboriginal divine mother, out of whose womb all the future celestial genealogies were developed, necessarily contained in herself the law of their development, and is accordingly represented by Hesiod as exercising a prophetic power with regard to the fates of the other gods.—(Theog. 463, 494, 625). The same writer remarks with equal ingenuity and truth, that Themis, her successor in the prophetic office, is only a personification of that law of development which, by necessity of her divine nature, originally lay in Gaea ; and I would remark, further, how admirable the instinct was of those old mythologists, who placed LOVE and RIGHT, and other ineradicable feelings or notions of the human mind, among the very oldest of the gods. It is notable also, that previous to Apollo, all the presidents of prophecy at Delphi—including the famous Phemonoe, not mentioned here but by Pausanias l. c., were women, and even Loxias himself could not give forth oracles without the help of a Pythoness. There is a great fitness in this, as women are naturally both more pious and more emotional than men. Hence their peculiar fitness for exercising prophetic functions, of which ancient Germany was witness—(see Cæsar B.C. I. 50).

Note 2 (p. 141). ". . . rocky Delos' lake."

There can be no question that SCHÜTZ was right in translating λίμνη, in this passage, *lake* (and not *sea*, as ABRESCH did), it being impossible that a well-informed Athenian, on hearing this passage in the theatre, should not understand the poet to refer to the circular lake in Delos, described by Herodotus in II. 170.

Note 3 (p. 141). "The Sons of Vulcan pioneer his path."

i.e. "The Athenians"—SCHOLIAST—"who," adds STAN., "were called the sons of Vulcan, because they were skilled in all the arts of which Vulcan and Pallas were patrons ; or, because Erichthonius, from whom the Athenians were descended, was the son of Vulcan ;" with which latter view Müller and Schoemann concur ; and it appears to me sufficiently reasonable. There is no reason, however, for not receiving, along with this explanation, another which has been given, that the sons of the fire-god mean "smiths." Artificers of this kind were necessary to pioneer the path for the procession of the god in the manner here described, and would naturally form, at least, a part of the convoy.

Note 4 (p. 141). ". . . Loxias, prophet of his father Jove."

'Tis plain from the whole language of Homer, both in the Iliad a Odyssey, that the fountain of the whole moral government of the world Jove, and, of course, that all divination and inspiration comes origina from him. Even Phœbus Apollo acts only as his instrument (Nägelsba Homerische Theologie, p. 105). STAN. compares Virgil Æneid III. 250.

Note 5 (p. 141).

". . . thee, likewise, who 'fore this temple dwellest."

The reading προνάια (or προνᾴα), which I translate, is that of WELL. a all the MSS.; but LIN. has put πρόνοια, *providential* or *foreseeing*, into t text, following out a criticism of Lennep on Phalaris, which has be stoutly defended by Hermann, in his remarks on Müller's Eumenic (Opusc. VI. v. 2, p. 17). This, however, in the face of an express passa of Herodotus (I. 92), as PAL. well observes, has been done rashly; a now FR. and SCHOE. bring forward inscriptions which prove that the is not the slightest cause for tampering with the text. I have not been a to learn the substance of Lennep's remarks otherwise than from the accou of them by Müller in the Anhang, p. 14; but, taken at their highest valu they seem only to prove that a vagueness had taken hold of the ancie themselves in respect to the designation of this temple, not certainly t Æschylus and Herodotus both made a mistake in calling it προνᾴα, or th all the transcribers of their texts made a blunder.

Note 6 (p. 141). ". . . ye Nymphs that love
The hollow Corycian rock."

"From Delphi, which lies pretty high, the traveller ascended abo 60 stadia, or two hours' travel, till he arrived at the Corycian cave, de cated to Pan and the Nymphs, in which there were many stalactites and l fountains."—SICKLER. *alte geog.* II. 134.

Note 7 (p. 141). "Thee, Bromius, too, I worship."

Bacchus, so called from βρέμω, *fremo*—the roaring or boisterous g His connection with Apollo (though drinking songs are not so common n as they were last century) is obvious enough; and some places of ancient poets where the close connection of these two gods is describ may be seen in STAN. The Scholiast to Euripides Phœnissai (v. 2 Matthiae) says expressly that Apollo and Artemis were worshipped on one peak of Parnassus, and Bacchus on the other.

Note 8 (p. 141). ". . . the godless Pentheus."

"A son of Echion and Agave, the daughter of Cadmus. He was successor of Cadmus as king of Thebes, and being opposed to the int duction of the worship of Dionysus in his kingdom, was torn to pie by his own mother and two other Mænads, Ino and Autonoe, who in th Bacchic frenzy believed him to be a wild beast. The place where Penth suffered death is said to have been Mount Cithæron; but, according some, it was Mount Parnassus."—*Myth. Dict.*

Note 9 (p. 141). "Poseidon's mighty power."

Next to Jove, Poseidon is the strongest of the gods, as the elem which he rules demands; and this strength, in works of art, is genera

indicated by the breadth of chest given to this god. So Homer, also, wishing to magnify Agamemnon, says—

"Like to Jove that rules the thunder were his kingly head and eyes;
Belted round the loins like Ares; like Poseidon was his breast."

Il. II. 478.

The connection of the god of the waters with Delphi is given by Pausanias x. 5, where it is said, that originally Poseidon possessed the oracle in common with Gaea; a legend easily explained by the fact, that all high mountains necessarily produce copious streams of water of which, no less than of the waves of ocean, Poseidon is lord.

Note 10 (p. 142). "A gray-haired woman, weaker than a child."

STAN. refers here to the account given by Diodorus of the origin of the Delphic oracle, c. xvi. 26, where he relates, that in the most ancient times the prophetess was a young woman; but that, afterwards, one Echecrates, a Spartan, being smitten with the beauty of a prophetess, had offered violence to her, in consequence of which an edict was published by the Delphians, forbidding any female to assume the office of Pythoness till she was fifty years old.

Note 11 (p. 142). ". . . the ravenous crew
That filched the feast of Phineus."

The Harpies; who, from the names given to them in Homer and Hesiod (and specially from Odyssey xx. 66 and 77 compared) seem to have been impersonations of sudden and tempestuous gusts of wind; though, again, it is not impossible that these winds may be symbolical of the rapacious power of swift and sudden death—

"Venit Mors velociter
Rapit nos atrociter,"

as suggested by BRAUN. See the article by Dr. SCHMITZ in the Biographical Dictionary.

Note 12 (p. 142). "Such uncouth sisterhood, apparel'd so."

With regard to the dress of the Furies, STAN. quotes a curious passage from Diogenes Laertius, which I shall translate:—"Menedemus, the Cynic," says he, "went to such fantastic excess as to go about in the dress of the Furies, saying, that he was sent as a visitant of human iniquity from Hades, that he might descend again, and report to the Infernal powers. His garb was as follows—a dun-coloured tunic (*χιτων*) reaching down to the feet, girt with a crimson sash; on his head an Arcadian cap, with the twelve signs of the Zodiac inwoven; tragic buskins, a very long beard, and an ashen rod in his hand."—VI. 9. 2. The Romans were once put to flight by the Gauls, dressed in the terrible garb of the Furies, with burning torches in their hands.—LIVY VII. 17.

Note 13 (p. 143). ". . . A bitter pasture truly
Was thine from Fate."

So I have thought it best to translate somewhat freely *τονδε βουκολούμενος πόνον* in order to express the original meaning of the verb *βουκολουμαι*. In this I have followed MÜLLER—*diese Schmerzentrift zu weiden*. This is surely more pregnant and poetical than to say with FR. "*Diese Lebensbahn durcheilend.*" The idea of *soothing* and *beguiling*, the only one given by

Hesychius, cannot apply to this place. PAL., who agrees with me in th translates the word in both places of our author where it occurs (here a in Agam. 655) by "*brooding over*," which differs little from my idea *feeding on*.

Note 14 (p. 143). "Her ancient image."

"The image of Athena Pallas, on the citadel, which existed in the d of Pausanias, and had maintained for ages its place here by a sort of inv able holiness. In the narrow area of the temple, on the north-east slop the Acropolis, Erechtheus had placed a carved image, either first made himself, or, perhaps, fallen from Heaven; and round this, as a centre, most ancient groups of Attic religion and legend assembled themselves. GERHARD, "*über die Minerven Idole Athen's*," quoted by SCHOE.

Note 15 (p. 144). "Behold these wounds."

I am not able to see what objection lies against the literal rendering o

ὁρά δε πληγὰς τάσδε καρδίᾳ σέθεν,

as I read with FR. and LINW. PAL. and SCHOE. take πληγὰς metaph cally to signify the contumelious language used by Clytemnestra to Furies; but this is surely rather going out of the way. If there were necessity for deserting the literal meaning, I would rather take Herma way of turning it (Opusc. VI. v. 2, p. 28), and read—

ὁρα δε πληγὰς τάσδε καρδιάς δθεν.

Siehe diese Wunden meines Herzens woher sie kommen!

Note 16 (p. 144).

"Read with thy heart; some things the soul may scan
More clearly, when the sensuous lid hath dropt,
Nor garish day confounds."

This method of speaking is quite in keeping with ancient ideas on nature of the connection 'twixt mind and body, as SCHOE. has proved f Galen (Kühn. Med. gr. V. 301). As to the sentiment which follows, ST has quoted—"*Quum ergo est somno sevocatus animus a societate et a tagione corporis, tum meminit praeteritorum, praesentia cernit, fu providet*"—Cic. Divinat. I. 30. According to Aelian (var. hist. III. the Peripatetics held the same opinion.

Note 17 (p. 144). "Once Clytemnestra famous, now a dream.

There is another translation of this passage—the old one in STAN.—

In somno enim vos nunc Clytemnestra voco,"

to which POT., E. P. Oxon., and MÜL. adhere; but I cannot help thinl with Hermann (Opusc. VI. p. ii. 30), that it is rather flat (*matt*) when c pared with the other. Which of the two the poet meant cannot perhap settled now, as the meaning might depend on the rhetorical accent which player was taught to give by the poet; but I am certain that the versio the text, sanctioned as it is by WAKEFIELD, SCHÜTZ, HERM., LIN., PAL. does not deserve to be stigmatised (in E. P.'s language) as "fan nonsense." When Clytemnestra calls herself "a dream," she uses the s sort of language which Achilles does to Ulysses regarding his own un stantial state as a Shade.—Odys. XI.

Note 18 (p. 144). ". . . and seeks
For help from those that are no friends to me."

I have thought it better to retain the old and most obvious interpretation of this passage; not seeing any proof that *προσίκτορες* can be used in this general way as applied to the gods who are supplicated, without being affixed as an epithet to some special god; as when we say *Ζεὺς ἀφίκτωρ* (Suppl. 1.)

Note 19 (p. 144).

CHORUS. Whether Hermann in his "*Dissertatio de Choro Eumenidum*" (Leipzig, 1816) was the first that directed special attention to the peculiar character of this Chorus as indicated by the Scholiast, I do not know (Wellauer says so, and I presume he knew). Certain it is that POT., by neglecting this indication, has lost a great deal of the dramatic effect of this part of the tragedy. The style of the chorus is decidedly fitful and exclamatory throughout, and must have formed a beautiful contrast to the steady stability of the solemn hymn that follows, beginning, "*Mother night that bore me.*" As to the particular distribution of the parts of this chorus, that is a matter on which, as SCHOE. remarks, no two critics are likely to agree; nor is minute accuracy in this respect, even if it were attainable, a matter of any importance to the dramatic effect of the composition as now read. The only thing to be taken care of is, that we do not blend in a false continuity what was evidently spoken fitfully, and by different speakers, with a sort of *staccato* movement, as the musicians express it. This is POT.'s grand error, not only here, but in many other of the choral parts of our poet; and, in this view, some of Hermann's remarks (Opusc. VI. 2, 38) on Müller's division are perfectly just. As for myself, by distributing the parts of the chorus among three voices, I mean nothing more than that these parts were likely spoken by separate voices. Scholefield and Dyer's view (Classical Museum, Vol. I. p. 281), that there were three principal Furies prominent above the rest in this piece, is not improbable, but admits of no proof. In my versification I have endeavoured to imitate the rapid Dochmiacs of the original.

Note 20 (p. 145). "Thou being young dost overleap the old."

The idea of a succession of celestial dynasties proceeding on a system of "development," as a certain class of modern philosophers are fond to express it, is characteristic of the Greek mythology.—(See p. 47 above, Antistrophe I.) The Furies, according to all the genealogies given of them, were more ancient gods than Apollo, with whom they are here brought into collision. Our poet, as we shall see in the opening invocation of the first grand choral hymn of this piece, makes them the daughters of most ancient NIGHT, who, according to the Theogony (v. 123), proceeded immediately from the aboriginal CHAOS. Hesiod himself makes the Erinyes, along with the giants, to be produced from the blood of Uranus, when his genitals were cut off by Kronos (Theog. 185); a genealogy, by the way, quite in consistency with the Homeric representation given in the Introductory Remarks, of the origin of the Furies from the curses uttered by injured persons, worthy of special veneration, on those by whom their sacrosanct character had been violated.

Note 21 (p. 147).

"But where beheading, eye-out-digging dooms."

In this enumeration of horrors I have omitted κακοῦ τε χλόυνις, concer ing which LIN. says, "*Omnino de hoc loco maximis in tenebris versamu nam neque de lectione, neque de verborum significatione certi quidqu constat.*"

Note 22 (p. 147). "She was murdered here,
That murdered first her husband."

The reasons given by WELL. and HER. (Opusc. vi. 2. 42.) why the t lines, 203–4 W., should not both be given with STAN., SCHÜTZ, and MU to Apollo, have satisfied LIN., PAL., FR., SCHOE., DR., E. P. Oxon., a BUT. Certainly the epithets ὄμαιμος and ανθέντης (which latter the Scholi interprets μιαρὸς) sound anything but natural in the mouth of Apollo. T emphasis put on ὅμαιμος in this very connection by the Furies, in v. 5 *infra*, noted by Hermann, should decide the question.

Note 23 (p. 147). ". . . . matrimonail Hera."

Literally the *perfect* Hera, the *perfecting* or *consummating* Hera, Ἥ τελεια, marriage being considered the sacred consummating ceremony social life, and, therefore, designated among the Greeks by the same ter τέλος, which they used to express initiation into the Eleusinian mysteri As Jove presides over all important turns in human fate, there is also nec sarily a Ζεὺς τελειος. See BLOM. Agam. 946, and Passow *in voce* τέλε Conf. Æn. iii. 605, *Juno pronuba*.

Note 24 (p. 147). "The nuptial bed, to man and woman fated."

STAN. has remarked that this word *fated*, μορσίμη, so applied, Homeric (Od. XVI. 392); and, indeed, though we seem to choose wives, we choose them oft-times so strangely, that a man may be said, wi out exaggeration, to have as little to do with his marriage as with his bi or his death—but all the three in a peculiar sense belong to that Μοῖρα, divine lot, which distributes all the good and evil of which human life made up.

Note 25 (p. 149).

CHORUS. For the arrangement of this Chorus I refer the reader back what I said on the previous one. The concluding part I have here arrang as an Epode, because it seems more continuous in its idea than what p cedes—less violent and exclamatory.

Note 26 (p. 150). "On Libyan plains beside Tritonian pools."

Æschylus here follows the tradition of Apollodorus (I. 3, § 6), that epithet Τριτογένεια, given by Homer to Pallas, was derived from the la Tritonis in Libya, near which she is said to have been born. Comp Virgil Æn. IV. 480.

Note 27 (p. 150). ". . . with forward foot firm planted,
Erect, or with decorous stole high-seated."

I have not the slightest doubt that τίθησιν ὀρθὸν πόδα in this passage only mean to *plant the foot down firmly and stand erect;* if so, τίθησι κα ρεφῆ πόδα can only mean to *sit*, "the feet being covered by the robes wh

sitting"—LIN. ; so also PAL. and SCHOE. Sitting statues of the gods were very common in ancient times, as we see in the Egyptian statues, and in the common representations of the Greek and Roman Jupiter (see Thirlwall's History of Greece, c. VI.). I am sorry that Hermann (p. 57) should have thrown out the idea that *κατηρεφῆς* in this passage may mean "enveloped in clouds," which has been taken up by Franz—

"Sichtbar sie jezt herschreitet, oder Wolkumhüllt,"

because manifestly *κατηρεφῆς*, in this sense, forms no natural contrast to *ῥῳδὸς*. The "*forward foot firm-planted*," I have taken from Müller's note, p. 112, as, perhaps, pointing out more fully what may have been in the poet's eye, without, however, meaning to assert seriously against a severe critic like Hermann, that the words of the text necessarily imply anything of the kind.

Note 28 (p. 150).

"The ordered battle on Phlegrean fields
Thou musterest."

The peninsula of Pallene in Macedonia, as also the district of Campania about Baiæ and Cumae, were called Phlegraean, or *fire-fields* (*φλέγω*), in all likelihood from the volcanic nature of the country, to which Strabo (Lib. V. p. 245) alludes. These volcanic movements in the religious symbolism of early Greece became giants ; and against these the Supreme Wisdom and his wise daughter had to carry on a war worthy of gods.

Note 29 (p. 151).

CHORAL HYMN. "This sublime hymn is of a character, in some respects, kindred to the *καταδέσεις*, or incantations of antiquity, which were directed to Hermes, the Earth, and other infernal Deities for the pupose of *binding down* certain hated persons to destruction. For this reason it is called *ὕμνος δέσμιος*. This character is specially indicated by the refrain or burden, which occurs in the first pair of Strophes ; such repetitions containing the emphatic words of the incantation being common in all magical odes. So in Theocritus (Idyll. 2), we have constantly repeated, '*Iungx, bring me the man, the man whom I mean, to my dwelling*,' and, in the song of the Fates at the marriage of Thetis in Catullus, the line—'*Currite ducentes subtemina, currite fusi!*' and there can be no question, the movements and gestures of the Furies while singing this hymn were such as to indicate the scapeless net of woe with which they were now encompassing their victim."—MÜL. The reader will observe how impressively the metre changes on the recurrence of this burden, the rhythm in the original being Pæonic ∪ ∪ ∪—, the agitated nature of which foot, when several times repeated, is sufficiently obvious. I have done what I could to make the transition and contrast sensible to the modern ear.

Note 30 (p. 151).

"The seeing and the sightless."

ἀλαδοισι και δεδορκόσι, *i.e.* the living and the dead ; an expression familiar to the Greeks, and characteristic of a people who delighted to live in the sun. *βλέπειν φάος—to look on the light*, is the most common phrase in the tragedians for to live ; and wisely so—

"Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
The soul in every part."—MILTON.

POT. has allowed himself to be led quite astray here by a petulant criticism of De Pauw.

Note 31 (p. 151). "The gleeless song, and the lyreless strain."

ὕμνος ἀφόρμιγκτος. "The musical character of this Choral Hymn m be imagined as working upon the feelings with a certain solemn grande The κιθάρα or lyre is silent; an instrument which, as the Greeks used always exercised a soothing power, restorative of the equipoise of the mir only the flute is heard, whose notes, according to the unanimous testim of antiquity, excited feelings, now of thrilling excitement, now of mute av always, however, disturbing the just emotional tenor of the soul. Assure the ὕτνος ἀφόρμιγκτος in this place is no mere phrase."—MÜLLER.

Note 32 (p. 152). "This work of labour earnest."

I have paraphrased, or rather interpolated, in this Antistrophe, a lit because I do not see much in it that is either translatable or worth tra lating. A meaning has been squeezed out of the two lines beginn σπευδόμενοι; but one cannot help feeling, after all, that there is someth wrong, and saying with honest Wellauer, "*certi nihil video.*" The m idea, shimmering through the first three lines, is plain enough—*that Furies exercise a function, the legitimacy of which no one is entitled to q tion.* This the words, μηδ ες ἄγκρισιν ἐλθεῖν, plainly indicate; and i upon this, and SCHOE.'s conjectural emendation of the first line—

σπευδομένοις ἀπέχειν τινὰ τᾶσδε μερίμνας,

"Diesem Geschäft das wir treiben verbleibe man ferne,"

that my paraphrase proceeds. With regard to the second part of Strophe, beginning with Μάλα γὰρ δυν, I follow WELL. and all the l editors, except SCHOE., in retaining it for metrical reasons, in the plac which Heath transposed it. SCHOE's observations, however, are worth serious consideration, as it is manifest that, if these Pæonic lines be repla to where they stand in all the old editions, viz.:—between ὀρχησμοὶ ἐπιφθόνοις ποδός and πιπτων δ'ουκ ὀιδεν, their connection with what prece and also with what follows, will be more obvious than what it is now. F observation, however, in answer to this, is not to be kept out of view—t this second part of the Antistrophe takes up the idea, as it takes up measure, with which the corresponding part of the Strophe, as now arrang ends, viz.—διόμεναί κρατερὸν ὄνθ, which the reader will find clearly brou out in my version—the concluding lines of the Pæonic section of Strophe—

"Though fleet we shall find him,"

being taken up in the opening lines of the Pæonic section of the Antistroph

"But swift as the wind,
We follow and find."

Note 33 (p. 154).

"The cry that called me from Scamander's banks."

The Sigean territory in the Troad was disputed between the Athen and the people of Mitylene; which strife Herodotus informs us (V. 94) en by the activity of Pisistratus, in favour of the Athenians—B.C. 606. In same territory, continues the historian, there was a temple of Pallas, w the Athenians hung up the arms of the poet Alcæus, who, though "*A bello,*" had been obliged to flee from the battle which decided the matte favour of the Athenians. Æschylus, like a true patriot and poet, throws claim of the Athenians to this territory as far back into the heroic time possible; and, by the words put into the mouth of Athena, makes the cl

on the part of the Lesbians tantamount to sacrilege.—See SCHOLIAST and STAN.

Note 34 (p. 155).

"He'll neither swear himself, nor take my oath."

"The Greek words, ἀλλ ὅρκον ὀυ δεξαιτ ἄν, ὀυ δοῦναι θέλει, have, in the juridical language of Athens, decidedly only this meaning; and, in the present passage, there is no reasonable ground for taking them in any other sense, though it is perfectly true that in some passages, ὅρκου διδόναι signifies simply to *swear*, and ὅρκον δέχεσθαι, *to accept an attestation on oath*."—SCHOEMANN.

Note 35 (p. 155). "In old Ixíon's guise."

"Ixíon was the son of Phlegyas, his mother Dia, a daugher of Deioneus. He was king of the Lapithæ, or Phlegyes, and the father of Peirithous. When Deioneus demanded of Ixíon the bridal gifts he had promised, Ixíon treacherously invited him as though to a banquet, and then contrived to make him fall into a pit filled with fire. As no one purified Ixíon from this treacherous murder, and all the gods were indignant at him, Zeus took pity on him, purified him, and invited him to his table."—*Mythol. Dict.*

Note 36 (p. 156). "The ancient city of famous Priam thou
Didst sheer uncity."

The original ἄπολιν Ιλίου πόλιν ἔθηκας, contains a mannerism of the tragedians too characteristic to be omitted. 'Tis one of the many tricks of that wisdom of words which the curious Greeklings sought, and did not find, in the rough Gospel of St. Paul.

Note 37 (p. 156). "For thee, in that thou comest to my halls."

The best exposition that I have seen of the various difficulties of this speech, is that of SCHOE., unfortunately too long for extract. As to κατηρτὺκώς, LIN. has, in the notes to his edition, justly characterised his own translation of it, in the Dictionary as *durissimum*. The first δμως, of course, must go; and there is nothing better than changing it with PAUW, MÜLL., and SCHOE., into 'εμοὶς. The second ὅμως must likewise go; say ὁσιὼς with MÜLL. or ὄντως with SCHOE. There is then no difficulty.

Note 38 (p. 157).

CHORAL HYMN. This chorus contains a solemn enumeration of some of the main texts of Greek morality, and is in that view very important. The leading measure is the heptasyllabic trochaic verse so common in English, varied with cretics and dactyles. I have amused myself with giving a sort of imitation of the rhythm, so far as the trochees and cretics are concerned; to introduce the dactyles in the places where they occur, would produce—as I found by experiment—a tripping effect altogether out of keeping with the general solemnity of the piece.

Note 39 (p. 158). "But who sports, a careless liver."

'Tis impossible not to agree with SCHOE. that these two lines are corrupt beyond the hope of emendation. He proposes to read—

τὶς δὲ μηδὲν ἐυσεβεῖ
καρδίας ἄγᾳ τρεων.

A very ingenious restoration; and one which, as matters now stand, I shou have little scruple in introducing into the text; but, for poetical purposes have not been willing to lose the image with which the present readin ἐν φάει, supplies me and Fr.—

"Wer der nicht bei Wonneglanz
Trauer auch im Herzen hegt," etc.

Note 40 (p. 158). "To the wise mean strength is given,
Thus the gods have ruled in heaven."

This is one of those current common-places of ancient wisdom, which a now so cheap to the ear, but are still as remote from the general temper a the public heart as they were some thousands of years ago, when fi promulgated by some prophetic Phemonoe of the Primeval Pelasgi. T great philosopher of common sense, Aristotle, seized this maxim, as t groundwork of practical ethics, some three hundred years before Christ 'Φθείρεται γαρ, says he, ἡ σωφροσύνη και ἡ ἀνδρεία ὑπὸ τῆς ὑπερβολῆς καὶ 'ελλειψεως, ὑπὸ δὲ τῆς μεσότητος σώζεται; and Horace, the poet of comm sense, preached many a quiet, tuneful sermon to the same ancient text—

"Auream quisquis mediocritatem
Diligit, tutus caret obsoleti
Sordibus tecti, caret invidenda
Sobrius aula."

Note 41 (p. 158). "Pride, that lifts itself unduly."

I will not multiply citations here to show the reader how this pride insolence of disposition, ὕβρις (the German *Uebermuth*), is marked by t Greek moralists as the great source of all the darker crimes with which t annals of our floundering race are stained (See Note, p. 349 above). Th are wrong who tell us that Humility is a Christian and not a Heath virtue: no doubt the name ταπεινοφροσύνη, used in the New Testame was not the fashionable one among the Greeks: but that they had t thing, every page of their poetry testifies, with this difference, however, be carefully noted, that while Heathen humility is founded solely on sense of dependence, Christian humility proceeds also, and perhaps mo decidedly, from a sense of guilt. Neither does the phraseology of Heath and Christian writers on this subject differ always so much as people se to imagine; between the μη ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ ὁ δεῖ φρονεῖν of St. Pa (Rom. xii. 3), and the ὀυδεπώποτε ὑπερ ἄνθρωπον ἐφρόνησα of Xenoph (Cyropaed. VIII), it were a foolish subtlety that should attempt to make distinction.

Note 42 (p. 159).

"Give the air-shattering Tyrrhene trump free voice."

"It is a correct and significant observation made by the Scholiast Iliad XVIII. 219, that Homer never mentions the trumpet (σάλπιγξ) in t narrative part of his poem, but only for a comparison: familiar as he w with the instrument, he was not ignorant that the use of it was new, and n native in Greece. Indeed, it was never universally adopted in that countr the Spartans and Cretans marching into battle, first to the accompanime of the lyre, and afterwards of the flute. The tragedians again are qu familiar with the Tuscan origin of the trumpet, though they make no scru of introducing it into their descriptions of the Hellenic heroic age." Müll.; Etrusker I. p. 286.

Note 43 (p. 160).

Enter APOLLO. Here commences a debate between the daughters of ight and the god accusing and defending, which, as Grote (History of reece, I. 512) remarks, is "eminently curious." And not only curious, ut unfortunately, to our modern sense at least, not a little ludicrous in some laces. The fact is, that the strange moral contradictions and inconsistencies common in the Greek mythology, so long as they are concealed or alliated under a fair imaginative show, give small offence; but when laced before the understanding, in order to be interrogated by the strict orms of judicial logic, they necessarily produce a collision with our practical eason and a smile is the result.

Note 44 (p. 161). ". . . himself did bind
With bonds his hoary-dated father Kronos."

"In the fable of the binding of Kronos by his son Jove, Æschylus saw othing disrespectful to the character of the supreme ruler, but only the maginative embodiment of the fact, that one celestial dynasty had been ucceeded by another. The image of binding, and of the battles of the Titans generally, might seem to his mind not the most appropriate; but he offence that lay in them was softened not a little by the consideration hat the enchainment of Kronos and the Titans was only a temporary affair, eading to a reconciliation. The result was, that the Titans themselves at ast acknowledged the justice of their punishment, and submitted themselves o Jove, as the alone legitimate ruler of Earth; and Herr Welcker is quite wrong in supposing that either here, or in the Agamemnon, or the Prometheus, there is any indication that the mind of Æschylus was fundamentally at war with his age in regard to the celestial dynasties."—SCHOEMANN'S Prometheus, p. 97.

Note 45 (p. 162). ". . . How
With any clanship share lustration?"

Or, with BUCK., "what laver of his tribe shall receive him?"—the word n the original being *φρατόρων*. The ancient Hellenic tribes *φράτραι* were ocial unions, founded originally in the family tie, and afterwards extended. These unions had certain religious ceremonies which they performed in common, and to which allusion is here made. (Compare Livy VI. 40, 41, *nos privatim auspicia habemus* of the Patrician families.) To be *ἀφρήτωρ*, or *excluded from a tribe* (Il. IX. 63), was among the Greeks of the heroic ages a penalty half-civil, half-religious, similar in character to the *excommunication* of the middle ages. Of this extremely interesting subject, the English reader will find a most luminous exposition in GROTE'S *Greece*, vol. iii. p. 74.

Note 46 (p. 162). ". . . whom we call
The mother begets not."

Strange as this doctrine may seem to our modern physiologists, it seems founded on a very natural notion; and to the Greeks, who had such a low estimate of women, must have appeared perfectly orthodox. The same doctrine is enunciated by the poet in the Suppliants, v. 279, when he says, "the male artist has imprinted a Cyprian character on your female features"—the image being borrowed from the art of coining. And this, like many fancies cherished by the Greeks, seems to have had its home originally in

Egypt. STAN. quotes from Diodorus I. 80, who says—"The Egypti count none of their sons bastards, not even the sons of a bought slave. they are of opinion that the father is the only author of generation; mother but supplieth space and nourishment to the fœtus." In the play Euripides, Orestes uses the same argument (Orest. 543).

Note 47 (p. 162). "Now, hear my ordinance, Athenians!"

This address of the goddess, of practical wisdom, in constituting Court of the Areopagus, was pointed by the poet directly against democratic spirit, in his day beginning to become rampant in Athens; a is applicable not less to all times in which great and, perhaps, necess social changes take place. The poet states, with the most solemn distin ness, that the mere love of liberty will never protect liberty from degener ing into licentiousness; but that a religious reverence for law is as essen to society as a religious jealousy of despotism. Only he who profoun fears God can dispense with the fear of man; and he who fears both G and man is the only good citizen.

Note 48 (p. 162). ". . . Here, on this hill,
The embattled Amazons pitched their tents of yore."

The Amazons, "as strong as men" (*αντιάνειραι*, Il. III. 189), are fam in the history of the Trojan war; and their expedition against Athe mentioned here, was familiar to every Athenian eye, from the paint in the *Stoa Pœcile*, described by Pausanias (I. 15). As to the histori reality of these hardy females, the sober Arrian (VII. 13) is by no me inclined (after the modern German fashion) to brush them, with a stroke his pen, out of the world of realities; and, considering what a strange a strangely adaptable creature man is, I see no reason why we should sceptical as to their historical existence.

Note 49 (p. 163). "Thou say'st."

"This is an ancient way of replying to a captious question, as we see the Gospel (Matth. xxvii.), where, when Pilate asks, 'art thou the king the Jews,' our Lord, Jesus Christ, answers in these very words Σὺ λέ —'*Thou say'st.*'"—STAN.

Note 50 (p. 163). "Such were thy deeds in Pheres' house."

"Alluding to Admetus, son of Pheres, whom Apollo raised from dead, having obtained this boon from the Fates, on condition that some should die in his stead.—See the well-known play of Euripides, Alcestes."—STAN. The Scholiast on that play, v. 12, as Dindorf no remarks that, on this occasion, Apollo moved the inflexible goddesses the potent influence of wine. This is alluded to a few lines below.

Note 51 (p. 164). ". . . all my father lives in me."

κάρτα δ'ειμι τοῦ πατρος; specially wisdom and energy.—So Milton—

"All my father shines in me."—Paradise Lost, VII.

Compare the Homeric epithet of Pallas *ὀβριμοπάτρη* with Nägelsbac Comprehensive Commentary—Hom. Theologie, p. 100

Note 52 (p. 164).

Apollo. FR., who examined the Medicean Codex, says that there is ere discernible the mark which introduces a new speaker. Who that peaker is, however, the sense does not allow us to decide; but Orestes and he Chorus having spoken, I do not see why Apollo, who showed such agerness before, should not now also, put in his word; and, therefore, leserting WELL., I follow the old arrangement of VICT. and STAN.

Note 53 (p. 167). "Sharing alone the strong keys that unlock
His thunder-halls."

As Pallas possesses all her father's characteristic qualities of wisdom and trength, so she is entitled to wield all his instruments, and even the thunder. STAN. quotes—

"Ipsa (Pallas) Jovis rapidum jaculata e nubibus ignem."—VIRGIL, ÆN. I. 46.

And Wakefield compares CALLIM, Lavac. Pall, 132. So the *aegis*, or *shield of dark-rushing storms* (ἀισσω), belongs to Pallas no less than to Zeus Il. V. 738).

Note 54 (p. 167). ". . . thou shalt hold
An honoured seat beside Erectheus' home."

Erectheus, who, as his name signifies (ἔραζε, *Eretz*, Heb., *Erde*, Teut., *Earth*), was the earth-born, or Adam of Attic legend, had a temple on the Acropolis, beside the temple of the city-protecting (πολιάς) Pallas, of which he ruins yet remain. The cave of the Furies was on the Hill of Mars, directly opposite.—See Introductory Remarks.

Note 55 (p. 168). ". . . save my city
From brothered strife, and from domestic brawls."

It was a principle with the Romans that no victory in a civil war should be followed by a triumph; and, accordingly, in the famous triumph of Julius Cæsar, which lasted three days, there was nothing to remind the Roman eye that the conqueror of Pharsalia had ever plucked a leaf from Pompey's laurels. In v. 826, I read with MÜL. 'ου δόμοις παρων, the present reading, πόλις, being clumsy any way that I have seen it translated.

Note 56 (p. 169). "The fortress of gods."

This designation is given to Athens with special reference to the Persian wars; for the Persians destroyed everywhere the temples of the Greek gods (only in the single case of Delos are they said to have made an exception), and the Athenians, in conquering the Persians, saved not only their own lives, but the temples of the gods from destruction.

Note 57 (p. 169). "Woe to the wretch, by their wrath smitten."

WELL., as usual, is too cautious in not changing μὴ κύρσας into δὴ κύρσας with PAUW and MÜL., or μὴν with LIN. and SCHOE.

Note 58 (p. 169). "Not for his own, for guilt inherited."

"The sins of the fathers, as in the Old Testament, so also among the Greeks, are visited on the children even to the third and fourth generation; nay, even the idea of original sin, derived from the Titanic men of the early ages, and exhibiting itself as a rebellious inclination against the gods more or less in all—this essentially Christian idea was not altogether unknown to the ancient Greeks."—SCHOEMANN.

Note 59 (p. 170). "And, when Hermes is near thee."

What we call a "god-send," or a "wind-fall," was called by the Gre ἕρμαιον, or a thing given by the grace of Hermes. In his original capac as the patron god of Arcadian shepherds, Hermes was, in like mann looked on as the giver of patriarchal wealth in the shape of flocks.—Il. x 490.

Note 60 (p. 170). "Ye Fates, high-presiding."

There is no small difficulty in this passage, from the state of the te but, unless it be the Furies themselves that are spoken of, as KL. imagi (Theol. p. 45), I cannot think there are any celestial powers to wh the strong language of the Strophe will apply but the Fates. If the forn supposition be adopted, we must interrupt the chaunt between Athena a the Furies, putting this Strophe into the mouth of the Areopagites, indeed, KL. proposes; but this seems rather a bold measure, and has fou no favour. It remains, therefore, only to make such changes in the t as will admit of the application of the whole passage to the Fates, w stand in the closest relation to the Furies, as is evident from Strophe I of the chorus (p. 146 above). This MÜL. has done; and I follow him, r however, without desiring some more distinct proof that ματροκασιγνῆτ in Greek, can possibly mean sisters.—See SCHOE.'s note.

Note 61 (p. 170). "Jove, that rules the forum, nobly
In the high debate hath conquered."

Ζεὺς ἀγορᾶιος. The students of Homer may recollect the appeal Telemachus to the Ithacans in council assembled (Odys. II. 68). Jo as we have already had occasion to remark, has a peculiar right of preside over every grand event of human life, and every important social institut so that, on certain occasions, the Greek Polytheism becomes, for the ne a Monotheism—somewhat after the same fashion as the aristocratic Gove ment of the old Roman Republic had the power of suddenly changing its on important occasions, into an absolute monarchy, by the creation of a D tator.

Note 62 (p. 172). "Gracious-minded sisterhood."

The Furies were called Εὐμενίδες, or gracious, to propitiate their st deity by complimentary language. Suidas says (*voc.* Εὐμενίδες) that Athe in this play, calls the Furies expressly by this name; but the fact is, t it does not occur in the whole play. Either, therefore, the word εὐφρ which I have translated "gracious-minded" in the play, must be conside to have given occasion to the remark of the lexicographer (which see sufficient), or, with HERMANN and SCHOE., we must suppose something have fallen out of the present speech.

NOTE.

On p. 132, after the *dramatis personæ*, I perceive that I have stated t the scene of this piece changes from Delphi to the *Hill of Mars*, Athe This is either inaccurate, or, at least, imperfect; for the first change scene is manifestly (as stated p. 148), to the temple of Athena Pallas, on Acropolis; and, though the imagination naturally desires that the institut of the Court of the Areopagus should take place on the exact seat of its fu labours, yet the construction of the drama by no means necessitates anot change of scene, and the allusion to the Hill of Mars in p. 162 is ea explicable on the supposition that it lies directly opposite the Acrop and that Pallas points to it with her finger.

NOTES TO PROMETHEUS BOUND

Note 1 (p. 183). "This Scythian soil, this wild untrodden waste."

"The ancient Greek writers called all the Northern tribes (*i.e.* all who dwelt in the Northern parts of Europe and Asia) generally by the name of Scythians and Celto-Scythians; while some even more ancient than these make a division, calling those beyond the Euxine, Ister, and Adria, Hyperboreans, Sarmatians, and Arimaspi; but those beyond the Caspian Sea, Sacæ and Massagetæ." Strabo, Lib. XI. p. 507.—STAN.

Note 2 (p. 183). "This daring wretch."

λωργὸν, a difficult word; "evil-doer"—MED. and PROW.; *Bösewicht*—TOELP.; *Freveler*—SCHOE. The other translation of this word—"artificer of man" (Potter)—given in the *Etym.* was very likely an invention of Lexicographers to explain this very passage. But the expounders did not consider that *Æschylus* through the whole play makes no allusion to this function of the fire-worker. It was, I believe, altogether a recent form of the myth.—See WEISKE. "The precise etymology of the word is uncertain."—LIN.

Note 3 (p. 183). ". . . a kindred god."

"A fellow deity"—MED. But this is not enough. Vulcan, as a smith, and Prometheus were kindred in their divine functions, for which reason they were often confounded in the popular legends, as in the case of the birth of Pallas from the brain of Jove, effected by the axe, some say of Hephaestus, some of Prometheus—APOLLODOR. I. 3-6. EURIPID. Ion. 455; from which passage of the tragedian WELCKER is of opinion that Prometheus, not Hephaetus, must have a place in the pediment of the Parthenon representing the birth of Pallas.—*Class. Museum*, Vol. II. p. 385.

Note 4 (p. 183). "High-counselled son
Of right-decreeing Themis."

Not CLYMENE according to the Theogony (V. 508) or ASIA, one of the Oceanides according to Apollodorus (I. 2), which parentage has been adopted by SHELLEY in his *Prometheus Unbound*. That Æschylus in preferring this maternity meant to represent the Titan as suffering in the cause of RIGHT against MIGHT, as Welcker will have it (*Trilog.* p. 42), is more than doubtful. One advantage, however, is certainly gained, viz., that Prometheus is thus brought one degree further up the line of ascent in direct progress from the two original divinities of the Theogony—URANUS or HEAVEN, and GEE or the EARTH; for, according to Hesiod, THEMIS is the daughter, CLYMENE only the grand-daughter, of these primeval powers (Theog. 135, 315). Thus, Prometheus is invested with more dignity, and becomes a more worthy rival of Jove.

Note 5 (p. 183). ". . . saviour shall be none."

I entirely agree with SCHOE. that in the indefinite expression—ὁ λωφήσων γὰρ ὀυ πέφυκέ πω any allusion, such as the Scholiast suggests, to

HERCULES, the person by whom salvation did at length come, would be the worst possible taste here, and quite foreign to the tone of the passage.

Note 6 (p. 184). "Jove is not weak that he should bend."

This character of harshness and inexorability belongs as essentially JOVE as to the FATES. Pallas, in the Iliad, makes the same complaint—

> "But my father, harsh and cruel, with no gentle humour raging,
> Thwarts my will in all things." ILIAD VIII. 360.

We must bear in mind that Jove represents three things—(1) that iron firmness of purpose which is so essential to the character of a great ruler; (2) the impetuous violence and resistless power of the heavenly elements when in commotion; (3) the immutability of the laws of Nature.

Note 7 (p. 184). "All things may be, but this
To dictate to the gods."

"Απαντ ἐπράχθη πλὴν θεοῖσι κοιρανεῖν—literally, *all things have been done save commanding the gods.* I do not know whether there is any philologic difficulty in the way of this translation. It certainly agrees perfectly with the context, and has the advantage of not changing the received text. SCHOE., however, adopting HERM.'s emendation of ἐπαχθῆ translates—

> "Last trägt ein jeder, nur der Götter König nicht."
> "All have their burdens save the king of the gods."

On the theological sentiment, I would compare that of SENECA—"*In regnati sumus; Deo parere libertas est*" (*Vit. Beat.* 15)—and that of EURIPIDES where the captive Trojan queen, finding the king of men, Agamemnon, willing to assist her, but afraid of the opinion of the Greeks, speaks as follows:—

> "Ουκ ἔστι θνητῶν ὅστις ἐστ' ἐλεύθερος,
> ἢ χρημάτων γαρ δοῦλος ἐστιν ἡ τύχης
> η πλῆθος αὐτὸν πόλεως, ἢ νόμων γράφαι
> ἔιργουσι χρῆσθαι μὴ κατὰ γνῶμην τρόποις."
>
> HEC. 864.

Note 8 (p. 185). "Thou hast been called
In vain the Provident."

This is merely translating PROMETHEUS (from προ before, and μῆτις counsel) into English. These allusions to names are very frequent in Æschylus—so much so as to amount to a *mannerism;* but we who use a language, the heritage of years, a coinage from which the signature has been mostly rubbed off, must bear in mind that originally all words, and especially names, were significant. See the Old Testament everywhere (particularly Gen. c. xxix. and xli., with which compare Homer, Odyssey xix. 407). And, indeed, in all original languages, like Greek or German, which declare their own etymology publicly to the most unlearned, no taunt is more natural and more obvious than that derived from a name. Even in Scotland, a man who is called *Bairnsfather* will be apt to feel rather awkward if he has no children. "In the oldest Greek legend," says WELCKER (*Tril.* p. 356) "names were frequently invented, in order to fix down the character as a main feature of the story"—(so Bunyan in the Pilgrim's Progress)—a true principle, which many German writers abuse, to evaporate all tradition into mere fictitious allegory. But the practice of the Old Testament patriarchs shows that the significancy of a name affords of itself no presumption against its historical reality.

Note 9 (p. 185).

Prometheus. The critics remark with good reason the propriety of the stout-hearted sufferer observing complete silence up to this point. It is natural for pain to find a vent in words, but a proud man will not complain in the presence of his adversary. Compare the similar silence of Cassandra in the Agamemnon; and for reasons equally wise, that of Faust in the Auerbach cellar scene. So true is it that a great poet, like a wise man, is often best known, not by what he says, but by what he does *not* say—(*και τῆς ἄγαν γάρ ἐστί που σιγῆς βάρος*, as Sophocles has it). As to the subject of the beautiful invocation here made by the Titan sufferer, the reader will observe not merely its poetical beauty (to which there is something analogous in Manfred, act I. sc. 2—

"My mother Earth,
And thou fresh-breaking day, and you, ye mountains,
And thou the bright eye of the Universe,")

but also its mythological propriety in the person of the speaker, as in the early times the original elementary theology common to the Greeks with all polytheists, had not been superseded by those often sadly disguised impersonations which are represented by the dynasty of Jove. OCEAN and HYPERION (*ὑπερίων*—he that walks aloft) are named in the Theogony, along with THEMIS and IAPETUS, as the first generation of gods, directly begotten from Heaven and Earth.—(Theog. 133–4.) In the natural progress of religious opinion, this original cosmical meaning of the Greek gods, though lost by anthropomorphism to the vulgar, was afterwards brought out by the natural philosophers, and by the philosophical poets; of which examples occur everywhere among the later classics. Indeed, the elemental worship seems never to have been altogether exploded, but continued to exist in strange confusion along with the congregation of fictitious persons to which it had given birth. So in Homer, Agamemnon prays—

"Father Jove from Ida swaying, god most glorious and great,
And thou SUN, the all-perceiving and all-hearing power, and ye
RIVERS and EARTH," etc.—Il. III. 277.

Note 10 (p. 185). "The multitudinous laughter."

ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα. I must offer an apology here for myself, Mr. Swayne, and Captain Medwyn, because I find we are in a minority. The Captain, indeed, has paraphrased it a little—

"With long loud laughs, exulting to be free,"

but he retains the laugh, which is the stumbling-block. Swayne has

"Ye ocean waves
That with incessant laughter bound and swell
Countless,"

also a little paraphrased, but giving due prominence to the characteristic idea. E. P. Oxon. has

"Ocean smiling with its countless waves,"

with a reference to Stanley's note, "Refertur ad levem sonum undarum ventis exagitatarum qui etiam aliquantulum *crispant* maris dorsum quasi amabili quadam *γελασιᾳ*," in which words we see the origin of POT.'s—

"Ye waves
That o'er the interminable ocean wreathe
Your crisped smiles."

PROW. has— "*Dimpled in multitudinous smiles.*"

And SCHOE.'s— "*Zahllosses Blinken.*"

And so BLOM. in a note, emphatically—

"*Lenis* fluctuum agitatio."

But why all this gentleness? Does it agree either with the strength of t poet's genius, or with the desolation of the wild scene around his hero? I once admit that γελάω is often used in Greek, where, according to our usag *smile* would be the word; but in the Old Testament we find the bro strong word *laugh* often retained in descriptions of nature; and I see r the least reason for walking in satin shoes here.

Note 11 (p. 186). ". . . in a reed concealed it."

νάρθηξ—"still used for this purpose in Cyprus, where the reed s retains the old Greek name"—WELCKER, *Tril.* p. 8, who quotes Walpol Memoirs relative to Turkey, p. 284, and Tournefort, Letter 6. I recoll at school smoking a bit of bamboo cane for a cigar.

Note 12 (p. 186). ". . . Ah me! ah me! who comes?"

The increased agitation of mind is here expressed in the original by t abandonment of the Iambic verse, and the adoption of the Bacchic— ἀχὼ, etc., which speedily passes into the anapæst, as imitated by Trochees. Milton was so steeped in Greek, that I think he must have h this passage in his mind when he wrote the lines of Samson Agonist v. 110, beginning "*But who are these?*" Altogether, the Samson is, in general tone and character, quite a sort of Jewish Prometheus.

Note 13 (p. 187). "Daughters of prolific Tethys."

The ancient sea-goddess, sister and wife of Oceanus, daughter of Heav and Earth. The reader will observe that the mythology of this drama p serves a primeval or, according to our phrase, antediluvian charac throughout. The mythic personages are true contemporaries belonging the most ancient dynasty of the gods. For this reason Ocean appears i future stage of the play, not *Poseidon*. Tethys, with the other Titans a Titanesses are enumerated by Hesiod, Theog. 132–7, as follows—

> "Earth to Uranus wedded bore Ocean deep with whirling currents,
> Coeus, Creios, Hyperion, Theia, Rhea, Iapetus,
> Themis, Mnemosyne, lovely Tethys, likewise Phœbe golden-crowned,
> Then the youngest of them all, deep-designing Kronos."

As for the epithet *prolific* applied to *Tethys*, the fecundity of fish is a prov in natural history; but I suppose it is rather the infinite succession of wa on the expanded surface of Ocean that makes his daughters so numerous the Theogony (362)—

> "Thrice ten hundred they are counted delicate-ancled Ocean maids."

Note 14 (p. 187). ". . . the giant trace
Of Titan times hath vanished."

Here we have distinctly indicated that contrast between the *old* and *new* gods, which Æschylus makes so prominent, not only in this play, also in the Furies. The conclusion has been drawn by various scholars t Æschylus was secretly unfavourable to the recognised dynasty of Jove, a that his real allegiance was to these elder gods. But the inference is ha and unauthorised. His taste for the sublime led him into these prime ages, as it also did Milton: that is all we can say.

Note 15 (p. 188). ". . . the new-forged counsels
That shall hurl him from his throne."

The new-forged counsels were of Jove's own devising—viz., that he should marry Thetis; of which marriage, if it should take place, the son was destined to usurp his father's throne.—SCHOLIAST.

Note 16 (p. 188). "O, 'tis hard, most hard to reach
The heart of Jove!"

Inexorability is a grand characteristic of the gods.

"Desine fata deum flecti sperare precando."—VIRG., ÆN. VI.

And so Homer makes Nestor say of Agamemnon, vainly hoping to appease the wrath of Pallas Athena, by hecatombs—

"Witless in his heart he knew not what dire sufferings he must bear,
For not lightly from their purposed counsel swerve the eternal gods."
ODYS. III. 147.

And of Jove, in particular, Hera says to Themis, in the council of the gods—

"Well thou knowest
How the Olympian's heart is haughty, and his temper how severe."—ILIAD XV. 94.

Note 17 (p. 188).

"My mother Themis, not once but oft, and Earth
(One shape of various names)."

Æschylus does not and could not confound these two distinct persons, as POT. will have it.—See Eumenides, 2. SCHOE. has stated the whole case very clearly. POT. remarks with great justice, that a multiplicity of names "is a mark of dignity;" it by no means follows, however, that *Themis*, in this passage, is one of those many names which Earth receives. In illustration we may quote a passage from the *Kurma Ouran* (Kennedy's Researches on Hindoo Mythology; London, 1831; p. 208)—"That," says Vishnu, pointing to Siva, "is the great god of gods, shining in his own refulgence, eternal, devoid of thought, who produced thee (Brahma), and gave to thee the Vedas, and who likewise originated me, and *gave me various names.*" Southey, in the roll of celestial *dramatis personæ* prefixed to the Curse of Kehama, says "that Siva boasts as many as *one thousand and eight names.*"

Note 18 (p 189). "Suspicion's a disease that cleaves to tyrants,
And they who love most are the first suspected."

"*Nam regibus boni quam mali suspectiores sunt, semperque his aliena virtus formidolosa est.*"—Sall. Cat. VII. "In princes fear is stronger than love; therefore it is often more difficult for them to tear themselves from persons whom they hate than to cast off persons whom they love."—RICHTER (Titan).

Note 19 (p. 189). "I only of the gods
Thwarted his will."

This is one of the passages which has suggested to many minds a comparison between the mythical tortures of the Caucasus and the real agonies of Calvary. The analogy is just so far; only the Greek imagination never could look on Prometheus as suffering altogether without just cause; he suffered for his own sins. This TORPEL. p. 71, has well expressed thus—"*Prometheus deos laesit ut homines bearet: Christus homines beavit ut suae, Deique patris obsecundaret voluntati.*"

Note 20 (p. 189). ". . . in cunning torment stretched."

ἀνηλεῶς ἐῤῥῠθμισμαι—"*so bin ich zugerichtet.*"—PASSOW. A sort studious malignity is here indicated. So we say allegorically to *trim* o handsomely, to *dress* him, when we mean to *punish*. The frequent u of this verb ῥυθμίζω is characteristic of the Greeks, than whom no peopl as has been frequently remarked, seem to have possessed a nicer sense the beauty of measure and the propriety of limitation in their poetry ar works of art. So Sophocles, Antig. 318, has ῥυθμίζειν λύπην.

Note 21 (p. 190). "Blind hopes of good I planted
In their dark breasts."

A striking phrase, meaning, however, nothing more, I imagine, accor ing to the use of the Greek writers (and also of the Latins with *caecus*) tha *dim, indistinct;* neither, indeed, is the phrase foreign to our colloqui English idiom—"The swearing to a *blind* etcetera they (the Puritan looked upon as intolerable."—Calamy's Life of Baxter. In the well-know story of Pandora, Hesiod relates that, when the lid of the fatal box wa opened, innumerable plagues flew out, only HOPE remained within.—*Wor and Days*, 84.

Note 22 (p. 190).

"And flame-faced fire is now enjoyed by mortals?"

Lieutenant-Colonel Collins, in his account of New South Wales (Londor 1804), mentions that the wild natives produced fire with much difficulty and preserved it with the greatest care. The original inhabitants of Ne Holland, and the wild African bushmen described by Moffat, the missionary are among the lowest specimens of human nature with which we ar acquainted. As for Æschylus, it is evident he follows in this whole piec the notion of primitive humanity given in his introductory chapters b Diodorus, and generally received amongst the ancients, viz., that the father of our race were the most weak and helpless creatures imaginable, like th famous Egyptian frogs, as it were, only half developed from the primeva slime.

Note 23 (p. 191).

Enter OCEAN. "This sea god enters," says Brunoy, quoted by POT., o "I know not what winged animal—*bizarrerie inexplicable.*" Very inex plicable certainly; and yet, as the tragedian expressly calls the animal *bird*, I do not see why so many translators, both English and German should insist on making it a *steed*. The bird certainly was a little anomalous having, as we learn below, four feet (τετρασκελὴς ὀρνύς, v. 395—a *four footed bird*); but it was a bird for all that, and the air was its element. I the creature must have a name, we must even call it a griffin, or a hippogriff notwithstanding Welcker's remarks (*Tril.* p. 26). Those who wish to se its physiognomy more minutely described may consult Aelian. hist. animal IV. 27, in an apt passage quoted from JACOBS by BOTH. There is an ambiguity in the passage which I have translated—

"Thought instinctive reined the creature,"

some applying γνώμῃ not to the animal, but to the will of the rider. So PROW.—

"Following still
Each impulse of my guiding will."

But for the poetical propriety of my translation I can plead the authority of SOUTHEY—

"The ship of Heaven instinct with thought displayed
Its living sail, and glides along the sky."
Curse of Kehama, VII. 1.

and of MILTON— "The chariot of paternal Deity
Instinct with spirit."—VI. 750.

and what is much more conclusive in the present instance, that of Homer, whose τιτυσκόμεναι φρεσὶ νῆες (Odyssey VIII. 556), or self-piloted ships of the Phœnicians, belong clearly to the same mythical family as the self-reined griffin of old Ocean.

Note 24 (p. 191). "From my distant caves cerulean."

i.e., in the far West, extreme Atlantic, or "ends of the earth," according to the Homeric phrase.

"To the ends I make my journey of the many-nurturing Earth,
There where Ocean, sire of gods, and ancient mother Tethys dwells,
They who nursed me in their palace, and my infant strength sustained,"

says *Hera* in the Iliad (XIV. 200).

Note 25 (p. 192).
"Enough my brother Atlas' miseries grieve me."

The reader will see by referring to the old editions and to POT. that the following description of the miseries of Atlas and Typhon is, in the MS., given to Ocean; and, it must be confessed, there seems a peculiar dramatic propriety in making the old sea god hold up the fate of the Cilician Blaster as a warning to the son of Iapetus, whom he saw embarked in a similar career of hopeless rebellion against the Thunderer. But philological considerations, well stated by SCHOE., have weighed with that editor, as with his predecessors BLOM. and WELL., whose authority and arguments I am for the present willing to follow, though not without some lingering doubts. The alteration of the text originally proceeded from Elmsley, and the original order of the dialogue is stoutly defended by TOEPEL. in his notes.

Note 26 (p. 192)
"The pillars of Heaven and Earth upon his shoulders."

If the reader is a curious person, he will ask how Atlas when standing on the Earth—in the extreme west of the Earth—could bear the pillars of *Heaven* AND *Earth?* and the question will be a very proper one; for the fact is that, as Hesiod distinctly states the case, he bore the pillars of *Heaven only* (Theog. 517). This is, indeed, the only possible idea that could be admitted into a mythology which proceeded on the old principle that the Earth was a flat solid platform in the centre of the Universe, round which the celestial pole (πόλος) wheeled. The phrase "*pillars of Heaven and Earth*" is, therefore, to a certain extent an improper one; for the Earth, being the stable base of all things, required no pillars to support it. In one sense it is true that the pillars of Atlas are the pillars of Heaven and Earth, viz., in so far as they have Heaven at one end and Earth at the other, which is what Homer means when he says (Odyssey I. 54), that these pillars "γαιάν τε καὶ οὐρανὸν ἀμφὶς ἔχουσιν." And that this is the idea of Æschylus, also, is plain, both from the present passage, and from the Epode of the next following Chorus, where, unless we force in one conjecture of Schütz, or another of Hermann into the text, there is no mention of anything but the *celestial pole*. In all this I but express in my own words,

and with a very decided conviction, the substance of the admirable note SCHOE. to v. 426, WELL.

Note 27 (p. 192). ". . . Typhon."

The idea of Typhon is that of a strong windy power, *δεινὸν ὑβριστ τ ἄνεμον*, according to the express statement of Hesiod (Theog. 307). T Greek word *Typhon*, with which our *typhus fever* is identical, expresses t state of being *swollen* or *blown up;* with this, the other idea of *heat*, whi belongs also to Typhon (Sallust, *περὶ θεῶν*, c. 4), is naturally connecte According to the elementary or physical system of mythology, therefo Typhon is neither more nor less than a *simoom* or *hot wind.*

Note 28 (p. 193).

"Knowest thou not this, Prometheus, that mild words
Are medicines of fierce wrath?"

The reader may like to see Cicero's version of these four lines—

"*Oceanus.* Atqui Prometheu te hoc, tenere existimo
Mederi posse rationem iracundiæ."
"*Prom.* Si quidem qui tempestivam medicinam admovens
Non ad gravescens vulnus illidat manus."

Tusc. Q., III. 31.

Note 29 (p. 194). ". . . holy Asia weep For thee, Prometheus."

Here, and in the epithet of the rivers in the Epode (compare Home Odyssey X. 351, *ἱερων ποταμων*, and *Nägelsbach*, Homer, Theologie, p. 8 the original word is *ἁγνος*, a term to be particularly noted, both in t heathen writers and in the Old Testament, as denoting that religious puri in connection with external objects and outward ceremonies which the Chr tian sentiment confines exclusively to the moral state of the soul. I ha thought it important, in all cases, to retain the Greek phrase, and not modernizing to dilute it. The religious sentiment in connection wi external nature is what the moderns generally do not understand, and le of all the English, whose piety does not readily exhibit itself beyond t precincts of the church porch. The Germans, in this regard, have a mu more profound sympathy with the Greek mind.

Note 30 (p. 194). ". . . Araby's wandering warriors weep For thee, Prometheus."

Arabia certainly comes in, to a modern ear, not a little strangely he between the Sea of Azof and the Caucasus; but the Greeks, we mu remember, were a people whose notions of *barbarian* geography (as th would call it) were anything but distinct; and, in this play, the poet see wisely to court vagueness in these matters rather than to study accuracy.

Note 31 (p 195).

"For, soothly, having eyes to see, they saw not."

With regard to the origin of the human race there are two princip opinions, which have in all times prevailed. One is, that man was origina created perfect, or in a state of dignity far transcending what he n exhibits; that the state in which the earliest historical records present him a state of declension and aberration from the primeval source; and that t

whole progress of what is called civilization is only a series of attempts, for the most part sufficiently clumsy, and always painful, whereby we endeavour to reinstate ourselves in our lost position. This philosophy of history—for so it may most fitly be called—is that which has always been received in the general Christian world; and, indeed, it seems to flow necessarily from the reception of the Mosaic records, not merely as authentic Hebrew documents, but as veritable cosmogony and primeval history—as containing a historical exposition of the creation of the world, and the early history of man. The other doctrine is, that man was originally created in a condition extremely feeble and imperfect; very little removed from vegetable dulness and brutish stupidity; and that he gradually raised himself by slow steps to the exercise of the higher moral and intellectual faculties, by virtue of which he claims successful mastery over the brute, and affinity with the angel. This doctrine was very common, I think I may safely say the current and generally received doctrine, among the educated Greeks and Romans; though the poets certainly did not omit, as they so often do, to contradict themselves by their famous tradition of a golden age, which it was their delight to trick out and embellish. In modern times, this theory of *progressive development*, as it may be called, has, as might have been expected, found little favour, except with philosophers of the French school; and those who have broached it in this country latterly have met with a most hot reception from scientific men, principally, we may presume, from the general conviction that such ideas go directly to undermine the authority of the Mosaic record. It has been thought, also, that there is something debasing and contrary to the dignity of human nature in the supposition that the great-grandfather of the primeval father of our race may have been a monkey, or not far removed from that species; but, however this be, with regard to ÆSCHYLUS, it is plain he did not find it inconsistent with the loftiest views of human duty and destiny to adopt the then commonly received theory of a gradual development; and, in illustration, I cannot do better than translate a few sentences from DIODORUS, where the same doctrine is stated in prose: "Men, as originally generated, lived in a confused and brutish condition, preserving existence by feeding on herbs and fruits that grew spontaneously. * * * Their speech was quite indistinct and confused, but by degrees they invented articulate speech. * * * They lived without any of the comforts and conveniences of life, without clothing, without habitations, *without fire* (Prometheus!), and without cooked victuals; and not knowing to lay up stores for future need, great numbers of them died during the winter from the effects of cold and starvation. By which sad experience taught, they learned to lodge themselves in caves, and laid up stores there. By-and-by, they discovered fire and other things pertaining to a comfortable existence. The arts were then invented, and man became in every respect such as a highly-gifted animal might well be, having hands and speech, and a devising mind ever present to work out his purposes." Thus far the Sicilian (I. 8); and the intelligent reader need not be informed that, to a certain extent, many obvious and patent facts seemed to give a high probability to his doctrine. "Dwellers in caves," for instance, or "troglodytes," were well known to the ancients, and the modern reader will find a historical account of them in STRABO, and other obvious places. The HORITES (Gen. xiv. 6) were so called from the Hebrew word HOR, a cave—(see Gesenius and Jahn, I. 2–26). But it is needless to accumulate learned references in a matter patent to the most modern observation.—MOFFAT'S "African Missions" will supply instances of human beings in a state as degraded as anything here described by the poet; and with

regard to the aboriginal Australians, I have preserved in my notes the follow ing passage from COLLINS: "The Australians dwell in miserable huts c bark, all huddled together promiscuously (ἔφυρον εικῆ πάντα!) amid muc smoke and dirt. *Some also live in caves.*" I do by no means assert, how ever, that these creatures are remnants of primeval humanity, according t the development theory; I only say they afford that theory a historic analogy while, on the other hand, they are equally consistent with the commonl received Christian doctrine, as man is a creature who degenerates from excel lence much more readily in all circumstances than he attains to it. Thes Australians and Africans may be mere imbecile stragglers who have bee dropt from the great army of humanity in its march.

Note 32 (p. 195). "Numbers, too,
I taught them (a most choice device)."

"The Pythagorean tenets of Æschylus here display themselves. It wa one of the doctrines attributed to this mysterious sect that they professed t find in numbers, and their combinations, the primordial types of everythin cognisable by the mind, whether of a physical or moral nature. They ever spoke of the soul as a number."—PROW. But, apart from all Pythagorean notions, we may safely say—from observation of travellers indeed certainly affirm—that there is nothing in which the civilized man so remarkably dis tinguishes himself from the savage, as in the power to grasp and handl relations of number. The special reference to Pythagoras in this passage is I perceive, decidedly rejected by SCHOE.; BERGK. and HAUPT., according to his statement, admitting it. Of course, such a reference in the mind o the poet can never be *proved;* only it does no harm to suppose it.

Note 33 (p. 196). ". . . the fire-faced signs."

(φλογωπὰ σήματα). PROWETT refers this to *lightning;* but surely, in the present connection, the obvious reference is to the sacrificial flame, from which, as from most parts of the sacrificial ceremony, omens were wont to be taken. When the flame burned bright it was a good omen; when with a smoky and troublous flame, the omen was bad. See a well-known descrip tion of this in Sophocles' Antigone, from the mouth of the blind old diviner Tiresias, when he first enters the stage, v. 1005; and another curious passage in Euripides' Phœniss. 1261.

Note 34 (p. 196). "And who is lord of strong Necessity?"

Necessity (Ἀνάγκη), a favourite power to which reference is made by the Greek dramatists, is merely an impersonation of the fact patent to all, that the world is governed by a system of strict and inexorable law, from the operation of which no man can escape. That the gods themselves are subject to this Ἀνάγκη, is a method of expression not seldom used by Heathen writers; but that they had any distinct idea, or fixed theological notion of NECESSITY or FATE, as a power separate from and superior to the gods I see no reason to believe.—See my observations on the Homeric μοῖρα in *Clas. Mus.*, No. XXVI., p. 437. And in the same way that Homer talks of the *fate from the gods*, so the tragedians talk of *necessity from or imposed by the gods*—τὰς γὰρ ἐκ θεῶν ἀνάγκας θνητον ὀντα δεῖ φέρειν. With regard to Æschylus, certainly one must beware of drawing any hasty inference with regard to his theological creed from this insulated passage. For here the poet adopts the notion of the strict subjection of Jove to an external FATE,

principally, one may suppose, from dramatic propriety; it suits the person and the occasion. Otherwise, the Æschylean theology is very favourable to the absolute supremacy of Jove; and, accordingly, in the Eumenides, those very Furies, who are here called his superiors, though they dispute with Apollo, are careful not to be provoked into a single expression which shall seem to throw a doubt on the infallibility of "the Father." For the rest, the Fates and Furies, both here and in the Eumenides, are aptly coupled, and, in signification, indeed, are identical; because a man's *fate* in this world can never be separated from his *conduct*, nor his conduct from his *conscience*, of which the Furies are the impersonation.

Note 35 (p. 196).

"No more than others Jove can 'scape his doom."

The idea that the Supreme Ruler of the Universe can ever be dethroned is foreign to every closely reasoned system of monotheism; but in polytheistic systems it is not unnatural (for gods who had a beginning may have an end); and in the Hindoo theology receives an especial prominence. Southey accordingly makes Indra, the Hindoo Jove, say—

> "A stronger hand
> May wrest my sceptre, and unparadise
> The Swerga."—Curse of Kehama, VII.

We must bear in mind, however, that it is not Æschylus in the present passage, but Prometheus who says this.

Note 36 (p. 197)

"Plant his high will against my weak opinion!"

The original of these words, "*μηδάμ θεὶτ' εμᾷ γνώμᾳ κράτος ἀντίπαλον Ζεὺς*," has been otherwise translated "*Minime Jupiter indat animo meo vim rebellem;*" but, apart altogether from theological considerations, I entirely agree with SCHOE. that this rendering puts a force upon the word *κράτος*, which is by no means called for, and which it will not easily bear.

Note 37 (p. 197). "Won by rich gifts didst lead."

Observe here the primitive practice according to which the bridegroom purchased his wife, by rich presents made to the father. In Iliad IX. 288, Agamemnon promises, as a particular favour, to give his daughter in marriage to Achilles *ἀνάεδνον*, that is, without any consideration in the shape of a marriage gift.

Note 38 (p. 197).

Enter Io. Io is one of those mysterious characters on the border-land between history and fable, concerning which it is difficult to say whether they are to be looked on as personal realities, or as impersonated ideas. According to the historical view of ancient legends, Io is the daughter of Inachus, a primeval king of Argos; and, from this fact as a root, the extravagant legends about her, sprouting from the ever active inoculation of human fancy, branched out. Interpreted by the principles of early theological allegory, however, she is, according to the witness of Suidas, the MOON, and her wanderings the revolutions of that satellite. In either view, the immense extent of these wanderings is well explained by mythological writers (1) from the influence of Argive colonies at Byzantium and elsewhere; and (2) from the vain desire of the Greeks to connect their

horned virgin Io, with the horned Isis of the Egyptians. It need scarcely be remarked that, if Io means the moon, her horns are as naturally explained as her wanderings. But, in reading Æschylus, all these considerations are most wisely left out of view, the Athenians, no doubt, who introduced this play, believing in the historical reality of the Inachian maid as firmly as we believe in that of Adam or Methuselah. As little can I agree with Both. that we are called upon to rationalize away the reality of the persecuting insect, whether under the name of *'οιστρος* or *μύωψ*. In popular legends the sublime is ever apt to be associated with circumstances that either are, or, to the cultivated imagination, necessarily appear to be ridiculous.

Note 39 (p. 198). ". . . save me, O Earth!"

I have here given the received traditionary rendering of Αλεῦ ὦ δᾶ; but I must confess the appeal to Earth here in this passage always appeared to me something unexpected; and it is, accordingly, with pleasure that I submit the following observations of Schoe. to the consideration of the scholar—"Δᾶ is generally looked on as a dialectic variation of γᾶ; and, in conformity with this opinion, Theocritus has used the accusation Δᾶν. I consider this erroneous, and am of opinion that in Δημητηρ we are rather to understand Δεαμητηρ than Γημητηρ; and δᾶ is to be taken only as an interjection. This is not the place to discuss this matter fully; but, in the meantime, I may mention that Ahrens *de dialecta Dorica*, p. 80, has refuted the traditionary notion with regard to δᾶ.

Note 40 (p. 198).

Chorus. With Well., and Schoe., and the MSS., I give this verse to the Chorus, though certainly it is not to be denied that the continuation of the lyrical metre of the Strophe pleads strongly in favour of giving it to Io. It is also certain that, for the sake of symmetry, the last line of the Antistrophe must also be given to the Chorus, as Schoe. has done.

Note 41 (p. 199). ". . . the sisters of thy father, Io."

Inachus, the Argive river, was, like all other rivers, the son of Ocean, and, of course, the brother of the Ocean-maids, the Chorus of the present play. Afterwards, according to the historical method of conception, characteristic of the early legends, the elementary god became a human person—the river was metamorphosed into a king.

Note 42 (p. 200). ". . . Lerne's bosomed mead."

We most commonly read of the *water* or *fountain* of Lerne; this implies a meadow—and this, again, implies high overhanging grounds, or cliffs, of which mention is made in the twenty-third line below. In that place, however, the reading *ἄκρην* is not at all certain; and, were I editing the text, I should have no objection to follow Pal. in reading *Λέρνης τε κρήνην*, with Canter. In fixing this point, something will depend upon the actual landscape.

Note 43 (p. 201). "First to the east."

Here begins the narration of the mythical wanderings of Io—a strange matter, and of a piece with the whole fable, which, however, with all its perplexities, Æschylus, no doubt, and his audience, following the old minstrels, took very lightly. In such matters, the less curious a man is,

the greater chance is there of his not going far wrong; and to be superficial is safer than to be profound. The following causes may be stated as presumptive grounds why we ought not to be surprised at any startling inaccuracy in geographical detail in legends of this kind:—(1) The Greeks, as stated above, even in their most scientific days, had the vaguest possible ideas of the geography of the extreme circumference of the habitable globe and the parts nearest to it which are spoken of in the passage. (2) The geographical ideas of Æschylus must be assumed as more kindred to those of Homer than of the best informed later Greeks. (3) Even supposing Æschylus to have had the most accurate geographical ideas, he had no reasons in handling a Titanic myth to make his geographical scenery particularly tangible; on the contrary, as a skilful artist, the more misty and indefinite he could keep it the better. (4) He may have taken the wanderings of Io, as Welcker still suggests (*Trilog.* 137), literally from the old Epic poem "Aigimius," or some other traditionary lay as old as Homer, leaving to himself no more discretion in the matter, and caring as little to do so as Shakespere did about the geographical localities in Macbeth, which he borrowed from Hollinshed. For all these reasons I am of opinion that any attempt to explain the geographical difficulties of the following wanderings would be labour lost to myself no less than to the reader; and shall, therefore, content myself with noting *seriatim* the different points of the progress, and explaining, for the sake of the general reader, what is or is not known in the learned world about the matter:—

(1) The starting-point is not from Mount Caucasus, according to the common representation, but from some indefinite point in the NORTHERN PARTS OF EUROPE. So the Scholiast on v. 1, arguing from the present passage, clearly concludes; and with him agree HER. and SCHOE.; Welcker whimsically, I think, maintaining a contrary opinion.

(2) The SCYTHIAN NOMADS, *vid.* note on v. 2, *supra.*; their particular customs alluded to here are well known, presenting a familiar ancient analogy to the gipsy life of the present day. The reader of Horace will recall the lines—

"Campestres melius Scythae
Quorum plaustra vagas rite trahunt domos."—Ode III. 24-9.

and the same poet (III. 4-35) mentions the "quiver-bearing Geloni"; for the bow is the most convenient weapon to all wandering and semi-civilized warriors.

(3) The CHALYBS, or CHALDAEI, are properly a people in Pontus, at the north-east corner of Asia Minor; but Æschylus, in his primeval Titanic geography, takes the liberty of planting them to the north of the Euxine.

(4) The river HUBRISTES. The Araxes, says the Scholiast; the TANAIS, say others; or the CUBAN (Dr. Schmitz in Smith's Dict.). The word means *boisterous* or *outrageous*, and recalls the Virgilian "*pontem indignatus Araxes.*"

(5) The CAUCASUS, as in modern geography.

(6) The AMAZONS; placed here in the country about Colchis to the northward of their final settlement in Themiscyre, on the Thermodon, in Pontus, east of the Halys.

(7) SALMYDESSUS, on the Euxine, *west* of the Symplegades and the Thracian Bosphorus; of course a violent jump in the geography.

(8) The CIMMERIAN BOSPHORUS, between the Euxine and the Sea Azof. Puzzling enough that this should come in here, and mention be made of the Thracian Bosphorus in the whole flig The word *Bosporus* means in Greek the *passage of the Cow.*

(9) The ASIAN CONTINENT; from the beginning a strange wheel! F the rest see below.

Note 44 (p. 203).

"When generations ten have passed, the third."

This mythical genealogy is thus given by SCHÜTZ from Apollodoru 1. Epaphus; 2. Libya; 3. Belus (see Suppliants, p. 228, above); 4. Danau 5. Hypermnestra; 6. Abas; 7. Proetus; 8. Acrisias; 9. Danae; 10. Pe seus; 11. Electryon; 12. Alcmena; 13. Heracles.

Note 45 (p. 203).

"When thou hast crossed the narrow stream that parts."

I now proceed with the mythical wanderings of the "ox-horned maid naming the different points, and continuing the numbers, from the form Note—

(10) The SOUNDING OCEAN.—Before these words, something seems have dropt out of the text; what the "sounding sea" (*πόντ φλόισβος*) is, no man can say; but, as a southward direction clearly indicated in what follows, we may suppose the CASPIAN with HER.; or the PERSIAN GULF, with SCHOE.

(11) The GORGONIAN PLAINS.—"The Gorgons are conceived b Hesiod to live in the Western Ocean, in the neighbourhood Night, and the Hesperides; but later traditions place them i Libya."—Dr. SCHMITZ, in Smith's Dict.: but SCHOE., in his note quotes a scholiast to Pindar, *Pyth.* X. 72, which places them nea the Red Sea, and in Ethiopia. This latter habitation, of course agrees best with the present passage of Æschylus.

With regard to CISTHENE, the same writer (SCHOE.) has an ingeni ous conjecture, that it may be a mistake of the old copyists, for th CISSIANS, a Persian people, mentioned in the opening chorus to th play of the Persians.

(12) The country of the GRIFFINS, the ARIMASPI, and the river PLUTO The Griffins and the Arimaspi are well known from Herodotus an Strabo, which latter, we have seen above (Note 1), places them t the north of the Euxine Sea, as a sub-division of the Scythians Æschylus, however, either meant to confound all geographica distinctions, or followed a different tradition, which placed th Arimaspi in the south, as to which see SCHOE. "The river PLUT is easily explained, from the accounts of golden-sanded rivers in th East which had reached Greece."—SCHOE.

(13) The river Aethiops seems altogether fabulous.

(14) The "Bybline Heights," meaning the *κατάδουπα* (Herod. II. 17), o place where the Nile falls from the mountains.—LIN. *in voc καταβασμός*, which is translated *pass.* No such place as BYBLUS is mentioned here by the geographers, in want of which POT. has allowed himself to be led, by the Scholiast, into rather a curious error. The old annotator, having nothing geographical to say

about this *Byblus*, thought he might try what etymology could do; so he tells us that the Bybline Mountains were so called from the *Byblos* or *Papyrus* that grew on them. This Potter took up and gave—

> "Where from the *mountains with papyrus crowned*
> The venerable Nile impetuous pours,"

overlooking the fact that the papyrus is a sedge, and grows in flat, moist places.

Note 46 (p. 204). ". . . the sacred Nile
Pours his salubrious flood."

ἔυποτον ῥέος, literally, *good for drinking*. The medicinal qualities of the *Nile* were famous in ancient times. In the Suppliants, v. 556, our poet calls the Nile water, *νόσοις ἄθικτον, not to be reached by diseases;* and in v. 835, *the nurturing river that makes the blood flow more buoyantly*. On this subject, the celebrated Venetian physician, Prosper Alpin, in his *Rerum Ægyptiarum*, Lib. IV. (Lugd. Bat. 1735) writes as follows: "Nili aqua merito omnibus aliis præfertur quod ipsa alvum subducat, menses pellat ut propterea raro mensium suppressio in Ægypti mulieribus reperiatur. Potui suavis est, et dulcis; sitim promptissime extinguit; frigida tuto bibitur, concoctionem juvat, ac distributioni auxilio est, minime hypochondriis gravis corpus firmum et coloratum reddit," etc.—Lib. I. c. 3. If the water of the Nile really be not only pleasant to drink, but, strictly speaking, of medicinal virtue, it has a companion in the Ness, at Inverness, the waters of which are said to possess such a drastic power, that they cannot be drunk with safety by strangers.

Note 47 (p. 204). ". . . thence with mazy course
Tossed hither."

I quite agree with SCHOE. that, in the word *παλιμπλάγκτος*, in this passage, we must understand *πάλιν* to mean *to and fro*, not *backwards*. With a backward or reverted course from the Adriatic, Io could never have been brought northward to Scythia. The maziness of Io's course arises naturally from the fitful attacks of the persecuting insect of which she was the victim. A direct course is followed by sane reason, a zigzag course by insane impulse.

Note 48 (p. 204). ". . . Epaphus, whose name shall tell
The wonder of his birth."

As Io was identified with Isis, so Epaphus seems merely a Greek term for the famous bull-god Apis.—(Herod. III. 27, and Müller's Prolegom. myth.) The etymology, like many others given by the ancients, is ridiculous enough; *ἐπαφή, touch*. This derivation is often alluded to in the next play, *The Suppliants*. With regard to the idea of a virgin mother so prominent in this legend of Io, PROW. has remarked that it occurs in the Hindoo and in the Mexican mythology; but nothing can be more puerile than the attempt which he mentions as made by FABER to connect this idea with the "promise respecting the seed of the woman made to man at the fall." Sound philosophy will never seek a distant reason for a phenomenon, when a near one is ready. When an object of worship or admiration is once acknowledged as superhuman, it is the most natural thing in the world for the imagination to supply a superhuman birth. A miraculous life flows most fitly from a miraculous generation. The mother of the great type of Roman

warriors is a vestal, and his father is the god of war. Romans and Gre will wisely be left to settle such matters for themselves, without the of "patriarchal traditions" or "the prophecy of Isaiah." The anci Hellenes were not so barren, either of fancy or feeling, as that they requi to borrow matters of this kind from the Hebrews. On the idea of "gene tion by a god" generally, see the admirable note in GROTE'S History Greece, P. I. c. 16 (Vol. I. p. 471).

Note 49 (p. 207). ". . . they are wise who worship Adrastéa."

"A surname of Nemesis, derived by some writers from Adrastus, who said to have built the first sanctuary of Nemesis on the river Asopus (Stra XIII. p. 588), and by others from the verb διδράσκειν, according to which would signify the goddess whom none could escape."—Dr. SCHMITZ. this subject, STAN. has a long note, where the student will find vari illustrative references.

Note 50 (p. 209).

"For wilful strength that hath no wisdom in it
Is less than nothing."

The word in the original, ἀνθαδιά, literally "self-pleasing," expres a state of mind which the Greeks, with no shallow ethical discernme were accustomed to denounce as the great source of all those sins whose co sequences are the most fearful to the individual and to society. St. Paul, his epistle to Titus (i. 7), uses the same word emphatically to express wha Christian bishop should *not* be (ἀνθάδη, self-willed). The same word is us by the blind old soothsayer Tiresias in the ANTIGONE, when preachi repentance to the passionate and self-willed tyrant of Thebes, ἀνθαδιά σκαιότητ ὀφλισκάνει, where Donaldson gives the whole passage as follows:

> "Then take these things to heart, my son; for error
> Is as the universal lot of man;
> But, whensoe'er he errs, that man no longer
> Is witless, or unblest, who, having fallen
> Into misfortune, seeks to mend his ways,
> And is not obstinate: *the stiff-necked temper*
> Must oft plead guilty to the charge of folly."
>
> SOPHOCLES, ANTIG. v. 1028

Note 51 (p. 209). ". . . unless some god endure
Vicarious thy tortures."

The idea of vicarious sacrifice, or punishment by substitution of o person for another, does not seem to have been very familiar to the Gre mind; at least, I do not trace it in Homer. It occurs, however, most d tinctly in the well-known case of MENŒCEUS, in Euripides' play of t *Phœnissæ*. In this passage, also, it is plainly implied, though the wo διάδοχος, strictly translated, means only a *successor*, and not a *substitu* WELCK. (*Trilog.* p. 47) has pointed out that the person here alluded to the centaur CHIRON, of whom Apollodorus (II. 5-11-12) says that "He cules, after freeing Prometheus, who had assumed the olive chaplet (WELC reads ἑλόμενον), delivered up Chiron to Jove willing, though immortal, to d in his room (θνήσκειν ἀντ' ἀυτου). This is literally the Christian idea vicarious death. The Druids, according to Cæsar (B.C. VI. 16), held t doctrine strictly—"*pro vita hominis nisi hominis vita reddatur non po aliter deorum immortalium numen placari.*" Of existing heathens practisi human sacrifice, the religious rites of the Khonds in Orissa present the id

vicarious sacrifice in the most distinct outline. See the interesting memoir Captain M'Pherson in *Blackwood's Magazine* for August, 1842.

Note 52 (p. 210). "Seems he not a willing madman,
Let him reap the fruits he sowed."

I have translated these lines quite freely, as the text is corrupt, and the mendations proposed do not contain any idea worth the translator's adopt- g. SCHOE. reads—

Τί γὰρ ἐλλείπει μὴ παραπάιειν
Ἐι τάδ ἐπαυχεῖ τί χαλᾷ μανιῶν ;

d translates

Was fehlet ihm noch wahnwitzig zo seyn,
Wenn also er pocht ? Wie zahmt er die Wuth ?

ROW. from a different reading, has

To thee, if this resolve seems good,
Why shouldst thou check thy frenzied mood ?

NOTES TO THE SUPPLIANTS

Note 1 (p. 219). "Jove the suppliant's high protector."

Ζεὺς ἀφίκτωρ, literally *suppliant Jove*, the epithet which properly belo to the worshipper being transferred to the object of worship. The rea will note here another instance of the monotheistic element in Polythei so often alluded to in these Notes. Jove, as the supreme moral governo the universe, has a general supervision of the whole social system of g and men; and specially where there is no inferior protector, as in the cas fugitives and suppliants—there he presses with all the weight of his h authority. In such cases, religion presents a generous and truly humani aspect, and the "*primus in orbe Deos fecit timor*" of the philosophers l its sting.

Note 2 (p. 219). "Of the fat fine-sanded Nile!"

WELLAUER, in his usual over-cautious way, has not received PAU emendation λεπτοψαμάθων into his text, though he calls it *certissimum* in notes. PAL., whom I follow, acts in these matters with a more ma decision. Even without the authority of PLINY (XXXV. 13), I sho adopt so natural an emendation, where the text is plainly corrupt.

Note 3 (p. 219). "Gently thrilled the brize-stung heifer
With his procreant touch."

See p. 204 above, and Note 48 to Prometheus. There prevails through this play a constant allusion to the divine significance of the name EPAPH meaning, as it does, *touch*. To the Greeks, as already remarked (p. 3 this was no mere punning; and the names of the gods (Note 17, p. above) were one of the strongest instruments of Heathen devotion. T there is an allusion to this in Matthew vi. 7, I have no doubt.

Note 4 (p. 219). "Ye blissful gods supremely swaying."

I see no necessity here, with PAL., for changing ὦν πολις into ὦ πολ but it is a matter of small importance to the translator. Jove, *the third* a method of designating the supreme power of which we have frequ examples in Æschylus—see the Eumenides, p. 164, where *Jove the Savi all-perfecting* is mentioned after *Pallas* and *Loxias*, as it were, to crown invocation with the greatest of all names. In that passage τρίτου occur the original, which I was wrong to omit.

Note 5 (p. 220). "Marriage beds which right refuses."

In what countries are first cousins forbidden to marry? WELCKER d not know. "*Das Eherecht worauf diese Weigerung beruht ist n bekannt.*"—WELCKER (*Trilog.* 391).

Note 6 (p. 221). "With Ionian wailings unstinted."

"Perhaps *Ionian* is put in this place antithetically to Νειλοθερῆ, *f the Nile*, in the next line, and the sense is, 'though coming from Egy

et, being of Greek extraction, I speak Greek.'"—PALEY. This appears to e the simplest and most satisfactory comment on the passage.

Note 7 (p. 221). "From the far misty land."

That is EGYPT. So called according to the Etymol. M. quoted by TAN., from the cloudy appearance which the low-lying Delta district resents to the stranger approaching it from the sea.

Note 8 (p. 222). "All godlike power is calm."

It would be unfair not to advertise the English reader that this fine entiment is a translation from a conjectural reading, *πᾶν ἄπονον δαιμονιων*, f WELL., which, however, is in beautiful harmony with the context. The ext generally in this part of the play is extremely corrupt. In the present tanza, WELL.'s correction of *δε ἀπίδων* into *ἐλπίδων* deserves to be celebrated s one of the few grand triumphs of verbal criticism that have a genuine oetical value.

Note 9 (p. 222). "Ah! well-a-day! ah! well-a-day!"

The reader must imagine here a complete change in the style of the usic—say from the major to the minor key. In the whole Chorus, the ind of the singer sways fitfully between a hopeful confidence and a dark espair. The faith in the counsel of Jove, and in the sure destruction of he wicked, so finely expressed in the preceding stanzas, supports the sink- ng soul but weakly in this closing part of the hymn. These alterations of eeling exhibited under such circumstances will appear strange to no one who s acquainted with the human, and especially with the female heart.

Note 10 (p. 223). "Ye Apian hills."

"Apia, an old name for Peloponnesus, which remains still a mystery, even after the attempt of Butmann to throw light upon it."—GROTE, Hist. f Greece, Part I. c. 4. Æschylus' own account of Apis, the supposed riginator of the name Apia, will be found in this play a few lines below. I ave consulted Butmann, and find nothing but a conglomeration of vague nd slippery etymologies.

Note 11 (p. 225). ". . . rounded cars."

καμπύλος, *with a bend* or *sweep*; alluding to the form of the rim of the ncient chariot, between the charioteer and the horses. See the figure in SMITH'S *Dict. Antiq.*, Articles *ἄντυξ* and *currus*.

Note 12 (p. 225). ". . . the Agonian gods."

The common meaning that a Greek scholar would naturally give to the hrase *θεοῖ ἀγωνιοι* is that given by HESYCH, viz., *gods that preside over ublic games*, or, as I have rendered it in the Agamemnon (p. 57 above), *gods that rule the chance of combat*. For persons who, like the Herald n that play, had just escaped from a great struggle, or, like the fugitive Virgins in this piece, were going through one, there does not appear to be any great impropriety (notwithstanding PAL.'s. *inepte*) in an appeal to the gods of combat. Opposed to this interpretation, however, we have the common practice of Homer, with whom the substantive *ἀγών* generally means an assembly; and the testimony of Eustathius, who, in his notes to

that poet, Iliad, Ω 1335, 58, says "παρ Αισχύλῳ ἀγώνιοι θεοὶ ὀι ἀγορᾶι *i.e. gods that preside over assemblies.*

Note 13 (p. 225). ". . . your sistered hands."

διὰ χερων συνωνύμων. I am inclined to think with PAL. that ἑυωνι may be the true reading; *i.e. in your left hands.* And yet, so fon Æschylus of quaint phrases that I do not think myself at liberty to reject vulgate, so long as it is susceptible of the very appropriate meaning give the text. "*Hands of the same name*" may very well be tolerated "*hands of the same race*"—"hands of sisters."

Note 14 (p. 225).

"Even so; and with benignant eye look down!"

I have here departed from WELL.'s arrangement of this short collo between Danaus and his daughters, and adopted PAL.'s, which appears to to satisfy the demands both of sense and metrical symmetry. That the something wrong in the received text WELL. admits.

Note 15 (p. 226). "There where his bird the altar decorates."

I have here incorporated into the text the natural and unembarra meaning of this passage given by PAL. The bird of Jove, of course, is eagle. What the Scholiast and STAN. say about the cock appears to pure nonsense, which would never have been invented but for the confu order of the dialogue in the received text.

Note 16 (p. 226). "Apollo, too, the pure, the exiled once."

"They invoke Apollo to help them, strangers and fugitives, because god himself had once been banished from heaven by Jove, and kept herds of Admetus.

'Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.'"—STAN.

Note 17 (p. 226).

"Here, Hermes likewise, as Greece knows the god."

This plainly points out a distinction between the Greek and the fam Egyptian Hermes. So the Scholiast, and STAN. who quotes Cic., N Deor. III. 22.

Note 18 (p. 226). "Can bird eat bird and be an holy thing?"

This seems to have been a common-place among the ancients. PLI in the following passage, draws a contrast between man and the infe animals, not much to the honor of the former:—"*Cætera animalia in genere probe degunt; congregari videmus et stare contra dissimilia; leon feritas inter se non dimicat; serpentum morsus non petit serpentes; maris quidem belluæ ac pisces nisi in diversa genera sæviunt. At heu homini plurima ex homine sunt mala.*"—NAT. HIST. VII. proem. T custom of blackening human nature (which is bad enough, without be made worse) has been common enough also in modern times, especia among a certain school of theologians, very far, indeed, in other respe from claiming kindred with the Roman polyhistor; but the fact is, great general law over-rides both man and the brute, viz. this—LIKE HE

WITH LIKE—the only difference being that human beings, with a great outward similarity, are characterized by a more various inward diversity than the lower animals. There are, in fact, men of all various kinds represented in the moral world—all those varieties which different races and species exhibit in the physical. There are lamb-men, tiger-men, serpent-men, pigeon-men, and hawk-men. That such discordant natures should sometimes, nay always in a certain sense, strive, is a necessary consequence of their existing.

Note 19 (p. 226).

"And of no host the acknowledged guest, unfearing
Ye tread this land."

ἀπρόξενος, without a πρόξενος, or a *public host* or *entertainer*—one who occupied the same position on the part of the state towards a stranger that a ξένος or landlord, did to his private guest. In some respects "the office of proxenus bears great resemblance to that of a modern consul or minister resident."—Dr. SCHMITZ, in Smith's Dict., article *Hospitium*. Compare SOUTHEY, Notes to MADOC. I. 5, *The Stranger's House*.

Note 20 (p. 227). "Of old earth-born Palæcthon am the son,
My name Pelasgus."

Here we have an example of those names of the earliest progenitors of an ancient race that seem to bear fiction on their face; PALAECTHON meaning merely the *ancient son of the land*, and PELASGUS being the name-father of the famous ante-Homeric wandering Greeks, whom we call PELASGI.

Note 21 (p. 227).

"All the land where Algos flows, and Strymon."

The geography here is very confused. I shall content myself with noting the different points from Müller's map (*Dorians*)—

(1) ALGOS; unknown.
(2) STRYMON; a well-known river in Thrace.
(3) PERRHÆBIANS; in Thessaly, North of the Peneus (Homer, Il. II. 749).
(4) PINDUS; the well-known mountain ridge in the centre of Northern Greece, separating the great rivers which descend on the one hand through Epirus into the Ionian sea and the Adriatic, on the other, into the Ægean.
(5) PÆONIA; in the North of Macedonia (Iliad II. 848).
(6) DODONA; in Epirus.

Note 22 (p. 227). "Apollo's son, by double right, physician
And prophet both."

This is somewhat of a circumlocution for the single Greek phrase, ἰατρόμαντις, *physician-prophet*; a name applied to Apollo himself by the Pythoness, in the prologue to the Eumenides (p. 142 above). The original conjunction of the two offices of prophet and leech in the person of Melampus, Apis, Chiron, etc. and their patron Apollo, is a remarkable fact in the history of civilization. The multiplication and isolation of professions originally combined and confounded is a natural enough consequence of the progress of society, of which examples occur in every sphere of human activity; but there is, besides, a peculiar fitness in the conjunction of

medicine and theology, arising from the intimate connexion of mind w bodily ailment, too much neglected by some modern drug-minglers, and al from the fact that, in ancient times, nothing was more common than to re diseases, especially those of a striking kind, to the immediate interferer of the Divine chastiser—(see Hippocrates *περὶ ἱερῆς νόσου init.*). Men never more disposed to acknowledge divine power than when under influence of severe affliction ; and accordingly we find that, in some sava or semi-savage tribes, the "medicine-man" is the only priest. It would well, indeed, if, in the present state of advanced science, professional m would more frequently attempt to restore the original oneness of the heali science—(see Max. Tyr. *πῶς ἂν τις ἄλυπος εἴη*)—if all medical men wou like the late Dr. Abercrombie, bear in mind that man has a soul as w as a body, and all theologians more distinctly know that human bodies enclo a stomach as well as a conscience, with which latter the operations of t former are often strangely confounded.

Note 23 (p. 228). ". . . Io, on this Argive ground,
Erst bore the keys to Hera."

i.e. was priestess of the Argive goddess. The keys are the sign custodiary authority in modern as in ancient times. See various instanc in STAN.

Note 24 (p. 228). "So runs the general rumour."

After this, WELL. supposes something has fallen out of the text; b to me a break in the narration of the Chorus, caused by the eagern of the royal questioner, seems sufficiently to explain the state of the te PAL. agrees.

Note 25 (p. 228). "Like a leaping bull,
Transformed he came."

Βουθόρῳ ταύρῳ. I have softened this expression a little; so mode delicacy compels. The original is quite Homeric—"*συῶν ἐπιβήτορα κάπρον* —Odyssey XI. 131. Homer and the author of the Book of Genesis agr in expressing natural things in a natural way, equally remote (as healt nature always is) from fastidiousness and from prudery.

Note 26 (p. 228).

King. A question has evidently dropt here ; but it is of no consequenc The answer supplies the first link in the genealogical chain deducing t Danaides from Io and Epaphus. See above, p. 400, Note 44.

Note 27 (p. 229). "Both this and that."

I have translated this difficult passage freely, according to the no of SCHÜTZ., as being most comprehensive, and excluding neither the o ground of objection nor the other, both of which seem to have occupied t mind of the virgins. I am not, however, by any means sure what t passage really means. E. P. Oxon. has—

"Who would seek to obtain kindred as masters?"

POT.—

"And who would wish to make their friends their lord."

Where the real ground of objection is so darkly indicated, a translat is at liberty to smuggle a sort of commentary into the text.

Note 28 (p. 229). "The wrath of suppliant Jove."

i.e. Jove the protector of suppliants. See above, Note 1.

Note 29 (p. 230). "Like a heifer young by the wolf pursued."

The scholar will recognize here a deviation from WELL.'s text λευκόσ-κτον, and the adoption of Hermann's admirable emendation, λυκοδίωκτον. PAL. has received this into his text, and LIN., generally a severe censor, pproves.—*Class. Museum*, No. VII. p. 31. Both on metrical and philo-ogical grounds, the reading demands reception.

Note 30 (p. 230). "Thou art the state, and the people art thou."

This is a very interesting passage in reference to the political constitution—f the term constitution be here allowable—of the loose political aggregates f the heroic ages. The Chorus, of course, speak only their own feelings; ut their feelings, in this case, are in remarkable consistency with the usages f the ancient Greeks, as described by Homer. The government of the eroic ages, as it appears in the Iliad, was a monarchy, on common ccasions absolute, but liable to be limited by a circumambient atmosphere of ligarchy, and the prospective possibility of resistance on the part of a people abitually passive. Another remarkable circumstance, is the identity of hurch and state, well indicated by Virgil, in that line—

Rex Anius, rex idem hominum Phœbique sacerdos.
ÆNEID III.

nd concerning which, Ottfried Müller says—"In ancient Greece it may be aid, with almost equal truth, that the kings were priests, as that the priests were kings" (Mythology, Leitch, p. 187). On this identity of church and tate were founded those laws against the worship of strange gods, which ormed so remarkable an exception to the comprehensive spirit of toleration hat Hume and Gibbon have not unjustly lauded as one of the advantageous oncomitants of Polytheism. The intolerance, which is the necessary con-equence of such an identity, has found its thorough and consistent cham-ions only among the Mahommedan and Christian monotheists of modern imes. Even the large-hearted and liberal-minded Dr. Arnold was so far ossessed by the ancient doctrine of the identity of church and state, that he ould not conceive of the possibility of admitting Jews to deliberate in he senate of a Christian state. In modern times, also, we have witnessed vith wonder the full development of a doctrine most characteristically Homeric, that the absolute power of kings, whether in civil or in ecclesiasti-al matters, is equally *of divine right*.

Τιμὴ τ' ἐκ Διός ἐστι, φιλεῖ δέ ἑ μητίετα Ζεύς.
IL. II. 197.

"For from Jove the honor cometh, him the counsellor Jove doth love."

On this very interesting subject every page of Homer is pregnant with nstruction; but those who are not familiar with that bible of classical cholars will find a bright reflection of the most important truths in GROTE, Hist. Greece, P. I. c. XX.

Note 31 (p. 231). "Without the people
I cannot do this thing."

Æschylus makes the monarch of the heroic ages speak here with a strong incture of the democracy of the latter times of Greece, no doubt securing

to himself thereby immense billows of applause from his Athenian audi as the tragedians were fond of doing, by giving utterance to liberal s ments like that of Æmon in Sophocles—"πόλις γὰρ οὐκ ἔσθ ἥτις ἀ ἑσθ' ἑνός." But how little the people had to say in the government of heroic ages appears strikingly in that most dramatic scene described in second book of the Iliad, which GROTE (II. 94) has, with admir judgment, brought prominently forward in his remarks on the power of ἀγορά, or popular assembly, in the heroic ages. Ulysses holds forth orthodox doctrine in these terms—

> "Sit thee down, and cease thy murmurings: sit, and hear thy betters speak,
> Thou unwarlike, not in battle known, in council all unheard!
> Soothly all who are Achæans are not kings, and cannot be;
> Evil is the sway of many; only one may bear the rule,
> One be king, to whom the deep-designing Kronos' mighty son
> Gave the sceptre and the right."—Il. II. 200.

Note 32 (p. 233). ". . . possessory Jove."

Ζεύς κτήσιος.—An epithet characteristic of Jove, as the supreme disp of human affairs. KLAUSEN (Theolog. II. 15) compares the epithet κλ from κλῆρος, *a lot*, which I have paraphrased in p. 230 above.

"The Jove that allotteth their lot to all."

KLAUSEN quotes Pausanias (I. 31–4) to the effect that Ζευς κτησιος worshipped in Attica along with Ceres, Minerva, Cora, and the awful M or Furies.

Note 33 (p. 234). "The pillar-compassed seats divine."

From a conjecture of PAL., περιστύλους; the πυλισσόυχων being evide repeated by a wandering of the eye or ear of the transcriber. Sopho I recollect, in the Antigone, has ἀμφικίονας ναοὺς. Of course, in the of such blunders, where the true reading cannot be restored, the best can be done is to substitute an appropriate one.

Note 34 (p. 235). ". . . the assembly of the people."

The word ἀγορά, *popular assembly*, does not occur here; but it is pla implied. It is to be distinguished from the βουλή, or *council of the chief* See GROTE as above, and HOMER *passim*.

Note 35 (p. 235). "All crowning Consummator."

As the opening words of this prayer generally are one of the fi testimonies to the sovereignty of Jove to be found in the poet, so conjunction of words τελέων τελειὀτατον, κράτος is particularly to be no The adjectives τέλειος, τελεος, παντελής, and the verb τελέω, are often app with a peculiar significancy to the king of the gods, as he who alone conduct to a happy end every undertaking, under whatever auspices c menced. This doctrine is most reverently announced by the Chorus of play towards the end (p. 244), in these comprehensive terms—

τι δε ἄνευ σέθεν
θνατοισι τελειον εστι.

"What thing to mortal men is completed without thee." And in sense Clytemnestra, in the Agamemnon (p. 69), prays—

Ζεῦ Ζεῦ τέλειε τὰς εμὰς ἐυχὰς τέλει.

In the over-ruling special providence of Jove generally the scholar should read KLAUSEN, *Theol.* II., 15, and *Class. Mus.* No. XXVI. pp. 429–433.

Note 36 (p. 236). "... hence by the brize."

The reader will observe that the course of Io's wanderings here sketched is something very different from that given in the Prometheus, and much more intelligible. The geography is so familiar to the general reader from the Acts of the Apostles, that comment is unnecessary.

Note 37 (p. 236). "Divinely fretted with fitful oar she hies."

The partiality of Æschylus for sea-phrases has been often observed. Here, however, Paley for the *ἐρεσσομένα* of the vulgate has proposed *ῥεθομένα*, aptly for the sense and the metre; but LIN. (*Class. Mus.* No. VII. p. 30) seems right in allowing the text to remain. I have taken up both readings into my rendering.

Note 38 (p. 236).

"Nor dared to approach this thing of human face."

It is difficult to know what *δυσχερὲς* in the text refers. POT. refers it to the mind of the maid—

"Disdaining to be touched."

To me it seems more natural to refer the difficulty of touching to the superstitious fears of the Egyptians; and to translate "*not safely to be meddled with.*" This is the feeling that my translation has attempted to bring out.

Note 39 (p. 237). "Jove's decided will."

I adopt Heath's emendation *βούλιος* for *δούλιος*. WELL., with superstitious reverence for the most corrupt text extant, retaining the *δούλιος*, is forced to explain *δούλιος φρην*, "*dictum videtur de hominibus qui Jovis auxilium imploraverunt;*" but this will never do. The reader is requested to observe what a pious interpretation is, in this passage, given to the connection of Jove and Io—how different from that given by Prometheus, p. 202 above. We may be assured that the orthodox Heathen view of this and other such matters lies in the present beautifully-toned hymn, and not in the hostile taunts which the poet, for purely dramatic purposes, puts into the mouth of the enemy of Jove.

Note 40 (p. 240). "Holy Hecate's aid avail thee."

Hecate is an epithet of Artemis, as Hecatos of Apollo, meaning *far* or *distant* (*ἕκας*). According to the prevalent opinion among mythologists, both ancient and modern, this goddess is merely an impersonation of the MOON, as PHOEBUS of the SUN. The term "far-darting" applies to both equally; the rays of the great luminaries being fitly represented as arrows of a far-shooting deity. In the Strophe which follows, Phoebus, under the name of Λύκειος, is called upon to be gracious to the youth of Argos.

ἐυμενὴς δ' ὁ Λύκειος
ἔστω πάσᾳ νεολαίᾳ,

and in the translation I have taken the liberty, *pro hac vice*, as the lawyers say, to suppose that this epithet, as some modern scholars suggest, has nothing to do etymologically with λύκος, *a wolf*, but rather with the root

λυκ, which we find in the substantive λυκάβας, and in the Latin Æschylus, however, in the SEVEN AGAINST THEBES (p. 266 above), ad the derivation from λύκος, as will be seen from my version. I have on add that, if Artemis be the Moon, her function as the patroness of par tion, alluded to in the present passage, is the most natural thing in world. On this whole subject, KEIGHTLEY, c. viii. is very sensible.

Note 41 (p. 241). "The bulging fence-work on each side."

(παράρρυσεις, more commonly παραρρύματα.) "The ancients, as earl the time of Homer, had various preparations raised above the edge vessel, made of skins and wicker-work, which were intended as a protec against high waves, and also to serve as a kind of breast-work behind w the men might be safe from the attacks of the enemy."—DICT. AN *voce* SHIPS.

Note 42 (p. 241). ". . . the prow
Fronted with eyes to track its watery way."

"It is very common to represent an eye on each side of the pro ancient ships."—Do. Do., and woodcuts there from Montfaucon. custom, PAL. remarks, still continues in the Mediterranean.

Note 43 (p. 241). "To champion our need."

WELLAUER says that the "sense demands" a distribution of the cluding part of this speech between Danaus and the Chorus; but I can no reason for disturbing the ancient order, which is retained by B though not by PAL. That the sense requires no change, the transla should make evident.

Note 44 (p. 242). ". . . their ships dark-fronted."

(κυανώπιδες.) The reader will call to mind the *νῆες μέλαιναι*, the bl ships in Homer.—See DICT. ANTIQ. *voce* SHIPS.

Note 45 (p. 242).

"A strong-limbed race with noon-day sweats well hardened."

This sentiment must have awakened a hearty response in the minds the Greeks, who were superior to the moderns in nothing so much as in prominency which they gave to gymnastic exercises, and their contempt all sorts of σκιοτροφία—*rearing in the shade*—which our modern book system tends to foster.

Note 46 (p. 242). "No Mars is in her."

ὄυκ ἔνεστ' Ἄρης, a proverbial expression for *pithless, nerveless.* The sa expression is used in the initiatory anapæsts of the Agamemnon. Ἄρης δ ἔνι χώρᾳ.

Note 47 (p. 242). "Good Greek corn is better than papyrus."

"Præter alios plurimos usus etiam in cibis recepta fuit papyrus"—ABU FADI—"radix ejus pulcis est; quapropter eam masticant et sugunt Ægypti —OLAUS CELSIUS, *Hierozoicon, Upsal*, 1745. I consulted this valuable w myself, but owe the original reference to an excellent "Essay on the Papy of the Ancients, by W. H. DE VRIESE," translated from the Dutch W. B. MACDONALD, Esq. of Rammerscales, in the *Class. Mus.* No. X

202. In that article it is stated that "when Guilandinus was in Egypt the year 1559–60, the pith was then used as food." HERODOTUS Euterp. 92) says that they eat the lower part, roasting it in an oven (κλιβάνῳ πλίξαντες). PLINY (XIII. 11) says, "mandunt quoque, crudum decoctumque accum tantum devorantes." In the text, of course, the allusion is a sort of roverbial ground of superiority, on the part of the Greeks, over the sons f the Nile, pretty much in the spirit of Dr. Johnston's famous definition of ats—"*food for horses in England, and for men in Scotland.*" I have only urther to add, that the papyrus belongs to the natural family of the *Cyperaceæ* r *Sedges*, and, though not now common in Egypt, is a well-known plant, nd to be seen in most of our botanical gardens.

Note 48 (p. 242). "The shepherds of the ships."

I have retained this phrase scrupulously—ποιμένες ναῶν—as an interesting elique of the patriarchal age. So in the opening choral chaunt of the Persians, Xerxes is "shepherd of many sheep," and a little farther on in he same play, *Atossa* asks the Chorus, "who is shepherd of this (the Athenian) people?" It is in such small peculiarities that the whole character nd expression of a language lies.

Note 49 (p. 242).

". . . on this coast
Harbours are few."

"Nauplia was almost the only harbour on the coast of Argolis."—PAL., rom BOTH. I am not topographer enough to be able to confirm this.

Note 50 (p. 243). "On a hanging cliff where lone winds sigh."

κρεμὰς. *Robortellus:* which WELL. might surely have adopted. The lescription of wild mountain loneliness is here very fine. Let the reader magine such a region as that of BEN-MACDHUI in Aberdeenshire, so well lescribed in *Blackwood's Magazine, August*, 1847. διόφρων is more than ὄρος; and I have ventured on a periphrasis. Hermann's Latin translation iven by PAL. is—"*saxum praeruptum, capris inaccessum, incommonstrabile, olitudine vastum, propendens, vulturibus habitatum.*"

Note 51 (p. 244).

CHORUS (*in separate voices, and short hurried exclamations*). I most ordially agree with WELL. in attaching the ten verses 805–15 to what ollows, rather than making it stand as an Epode to what precedes. A hange of style is distinctly felt at the conclusion of the third Antistrophe; he dim apprehension of approaching harm becomes a distinct perception, nd the choral music more turbid, sudden, and exclamatory. This I have ndicated by breaking up the general chaunt into individual voices.—See p. 377, Note 19.

Note 52 (p. 245).

"Hence to the ships! to the good ships fare ye!"

"What follows is most corrupt, but so made up of short sentences, commands, and exclamations, that if the whole passage were wanting, it would not be much missed. It is very tasteless, and full of turgid phraseology."—PALEY. All this is very true, if we look on the Suppliants as a play written to be read; but, being an opera composed for music, what appears to us tasteless and extravagant, without that stimulating emotional atmosphere,

might have been, to the Athenians who heard it, the grand floodtid tempestuous triumph of the piece. Compare, especially, the passi Oriental coronach with which "The Persians" concludes. We must forget that we possess only the skeleton of the sacred opera of the Gre

Note 53 (p. 248).

"To find stray goods the world all over, Hermes
Is prince of patrons."

"*Rei furtivae*," as the civil law says, "*aeterna est auctoritas*"; an Herald, being sent out on a mission to reclaim what was abstracted, rec no credentials but the fact of the heraldship, which he exercises unde patronage of the herald-god Hermes. It may be also, as the comment suggest—though I recollect no passage to prove it—that Hermes, be thief himself, and the patron of thieves, was the most apt deity to v intervention might be referred the recovery of stolen goods. Some of this kind seems implied in the epithet *μαστηρ*ῳ, *the searcher*, here to Hermes.

Note 54 (p. 250).

"In the general view, and publishes their praise."

After these words I have missed out a line, of which I can make no satisfactory—

κἄλωρα κωλύουσαν ὡς μένειν ἐρῶ.

A few lines below, for *δυν ἐκληρώθη δορὶ*, I have followed PAL. in ado HEATH'S *εἶνεκ' ἠρόθη δορὶ*.

Note 55 (p. 251).

CHORAL HYMN. This final Chorus of the Suppliants and the op one of the Persians are remarkable for the use of that peculiar rhy technically called the *Ionic a minore*, of which a familiar example exis Horace, Ode III. 12. What the æsthetical or moral effect of this me was on an Athenian ear it is perhaps impossible for us, at the present to know; but I have thought it right, in both cases, when it occurs, to the peculiarity by the adoption of an English rhythm, in some similar d removed from the vulgar use, and not without a certain cognate character modern music, at least, the Ionic of the Greek text and the measure used i translation are mere varieties of the same rhythmical genus marked musi by $\frac{8}{4}$. As for the structure of the Chorus, its division into two semi-cho is anticipative of the division of feeling among the sisters, which afterw arose when the conduct of their stern father forced them to choose bet filial and connubial duty. One thing also is plain, that there is nothin a real moral finale in this Chorus. Regarded as a concluding ode, it w most weak and impotent performance. The tone of grateful jubilee which it sets out, is, after the second Strophe, suddenly changed int original note of apprehension, evil-foreboding, doubt, and anxiety, pl pointing to the terrible catastrophe to be unveiled in the immediately ceeding play.

Note 56 (p. 251). "Yet, mighty praise be thine.
Cyprian queen divine!"

The Chorus here are evidently moved by a religious apprehension in placing themselves under the patronage of the goddess of chastity, may have treated lightly the power and the functions of the great godde

ve. To reconcile the claims of opposing deities was a great problem of ractical piety with all devout polytheists. The introduction of Aphrodite ere, as has been remarked, is also plainly prophetic of the part which ypermnestra is to play in the subsequent piece, under the influence of the reat Cyprean goddess preferring the love of a husband to the command a father.

Note 57 (p. 252). "Lovely Harmonia."

"Hesiod says that Harmonia (*ἁρμονία*—order or arrangement) was the aughter of Ares and Aphrodite. This has evidently all the appearance of physical myth; for from love and strife—*i.e.* attraction and repulsion—ises the order or harmony of the universe."—KEIGHTLEY.

Note 58 (p. 252). "Yet must I fear the chase."

φυγάδεσσιν δ ἐπιπλόιας. HAUPT adopted by PAL. An excellent con-ecture.

NOTES TO THE SEVEN AGAINST THEB

Note 1 (p. 263). "Which may averting Jove from me avert."

The epithet ἀλεξητηριος or ἀλεξίκακος (Pausan. Att. III.) or the ave applied to the gods (see Odys. III. 346, is to be noted), as characterist the grand fact in the history of mind, that with rude nations the fear of is the dominant religious motive; so much so, that in the accounts whic read of some savage, or semi-savage nations, religion seems to co altogether in a vague, dim fear of some unknown power, either wit moral attributes altogether, or even positively malignant. In this histo sense, the famous maxim, *primus in orbe deos fecit timor*—however sufficient as a principle of general theology—is quite true. In the pre passage, the phraseology is remarkable.

ὧν Ζεὺς ἀλεξητήριος
Ἐπώνυμος γένοιτο—

literally, *of which evils may Jove be the averter, and in being so, answe his name.* This allusion to the names and epithets of the gods occur Æschylus with a frequency which marks it as a point of devotional propr in the worship of the Greeks. I have expressed the same thing in the by the repetition of *avert.* So in the *Choephoræ*, p. 103, *Herald Her herald me in this*, &c.

Note 2 (p. 263).

"In his ear and inward sense deep-pondered truths,
By no false art, though without help from fire."

"Tiresias, the Theban seer, was blind, and could not divine by fir other visible signs; but he had received from Pallas a remarkably ac hearing, and the faculty of understanding the voices of birds."—*Apollo* III. 6.—STAN. WELL. objects to this, but surely without good reas Why are the ears—εν ὦσι—mentioned so expressly, if not to make s contrast to the common method of divining by the eye?

Note 3 (p. 264). "By Mars, Enyo, and blood-loving Terror."

With Mars in Homer (Il. IV. 440) are coupled Φόβος and Δεῖμος, *F* and *Terror*, as in this passage of Æschylus, and Ἔρις, *Strife.*

"FEAR and TERROR went with him, and STRIFE that rages without bound,
STRIFE of Mars the man-destroyer, sister and companion dear."

And in Livy (I. 27), Tullus Hostilius being pressed in battle, "*duode vovit Salios, fanaque* PALLORI *et* PAVORI."—Compare Cic. de Nat. D III. c. 25. ENYO is coupled in Homer as a war-goddess with ATHENA—

"Well Tydides knew that Venus was no goddess made for war,
Not Athena, not Eyno city-sacking."

In our language, we have naturalized her Roman counterpart BELLONA.

Note 4 (p. 264). ". . . the chariot of Adrastus."

"Because it had been predicted that Adrastus alone should survive the war."—SCHOLIAST.

Note 5 (p. 265).

CHORUS. This Chorus, SCHNEIDER remarks, naturally divides itself into four, or, as I think, rather into five distinct parts. (1) The Chorus enter the stage in great hurry and agitation, indicated by the Dochmiac verse—*σποράδην*, according to the analogy of the Eumenides—(see the *βίος Αισχύλου*)—in scattered array, and, perhaps in the person of their Coryphæus, describe generally the arrival of the Theban host, and their march against the walls of Thebes. (2) But as the agitation increases, continuity of description becomes impossible, and a series of broken and irregular exclamations and invocations by individual voices follows. (3) Then a more regular prayer, or the chaunting of the Theban litany begins, in which we must suppose the whole band to join. (4) This is interrupted, however, by the near terror of the assault, and the chaunt is again broken into hurried exclamations of individual voices. (5) The litany is then wound up by the whole band. Of course no absolute external proof of matters of this kind can be offered; but the internal evidence is sufficiently strong to warrant the translator in marking the peculiar character of the Chorus in some such manner as I have done. For dramatic effect, this is of the utmost consequence. Nothing has more hurt the dramatic character of Æschylus, than the practice of throwing into the form of a continuous ode what was written for a series of well-arranged individual voices. Whoever he was among more recent scholars that first analyzed the Choruses with a special view to separate the exclamatory parts from the continuous chaunt deserves my best thanks.—See Note 19 to the EUMENIDES, p. 377.

Note 6 (p. 265).

"With clattering hoofs, on and on still they ride."

πεδιοπλόκτυπος. Before this word, another epithet *ελεδεμνας* occurs, which the intelligent scholar will readily excuse me for having omitted altogether.

Note 7 (p. 265). " . . the white-shielded host."

The epithet *λεύκασπις* seems characteristic of the Argive host in the Bœotian legend. SOPHOCLES, in the beautiful opening Chorus of the *Antigone*, and EURIPIDES in the *Phœnissæ*, has it. Such traits were of course adopted by the tragedians from the old local legends always with conscientious fidelity. STAN. refers it to the general white or shining aspect of the shields of the common soldiers, distinguished by no various-coloured blazonry; which may be the true explanation.

Note 8 (p. 265). "With chaplet and stole."

In modern times, the mightiest monarchs have not thought it beneath their dignity to present, and sometimes, even, to work a petticoat to the Virgin Mary. In ancient times, the presentation of a *πέπλος* to the maiden goddess of Athens was no less famous—

> "Take the largest and the finest robe that in thy chamber lies—
> Take the robe to thee so dear, and place it duly on the knees
> Of the beautiful-haired Athena."—IL. VI. 273.

VIRGIL has not forgotten this—*Æneid* I. 480. The *peplos* was a large up dress, often reaching to the feet. YATES, in the *Dict. Antig.*, translate "shawl," which may be the most accurate word, but, from its mod associations, of course, unsuitable for poetry.—See the article.

Note 9 (p. 265). "O Ares, that shines in the helmet of gold."

Mars was one of the native ἐπιχώριοι gods of Thebes, as the old legen the dragon and the sown-teeth sufficiently testifies. The dragon was offspring of Mars; and the fountain which it guarded, when it was slain the Phœnician wanderer, was sacred to that god. APOLLODOR. III. UNGER. *de fonte Aret.* p. 103.

Note 10 (p. 266) "And their steeds with ringing bridles."

Bells were often used on the harness of horses, and on different parts the armour, to increase the war-alarm—the κλαγγή τε ἐνοπή τε (Il. III. which is so essential a part of the instinct of assault. See the descriptio Tydeus below, and Dict. Antiq. *tintinnabulum*, where is represente fragment of ancient sculpture, showing the manner in which bells w attached to the collars of war-horses. Dio Cassius (Lib. LXXVI. mentions that "the arms of the Britons are a shield and short spear, in upper part whereof is an apple of brass, which, being shaken, terri the enemy with the sound." Compare κωδωνο, φαλαραπωλους. *Aristo Ran.* 963.

Note 11 (p. 266). "God of pawing steeds, Poseidon."

Neptune is called equestrian or ἵππιος, no doubt, from the analogy of swift waves, over which his car rides, to the fleet ambling of horses. the mythical contest with Pallas, accordingly, while the Athenian maid p duces the olive tree, the god of waves sends forth a war-horse.

Note 12 (p. 266). "Save us, Cypris, mother of Thebans."

"Harmonia, whom Cadmus married, was the daughter of Mars Aphrodite."—SCHOLIAST.

Note 13 (p. 266). "Save us, save us, Wolf-Apollo."

Here is one of those pious puns upon the epithets of the gods, wh were alluded to in Note 1 above. With regard to this epithet of Apo who, in the Electra of SOPHOCLES, v. 6, is called distinctly *wolf-sl* (λυκοκτόνος), there seems to me little doubt that the Scholiast on passage is right in referring this function to Apollo, as the god of a past people (νόμιος). PASSOW (*Dict. in voce*), compare *Pausan.* (Cor. II. 19

Note 14 (p. 267). "O Onca, blest Onca."

Onca, says the Scholiast, was a name of Athena, a Phœnician epit brought by Cadmus from his native country. The Oncan gate was the s as the Ogygian gate of Thebes mentioned by other writers, and the n ancient of all the seven.—UNGER. p. 267; Pausan. IX. 8.

Note 15 (p. 267). "The seven-gated city deliver, deliver."

The current traditional epithet of Thebes, whose seven gates were famous as the seven mouths of the Nile—

"Rari quippe boni : numerus vix est totidem quot
Thebarum portæ vel divitis ostia Nili."—Juv. Sat. XIII. 26.

And *Homer*, in the Odyssey XI. 263, talks of—

"Amphion and Zethus,
First who founded and uptowered the seat of seven-gated Thebes."

These may suffice from a whole host of citations in UNGER. Vol. I. p. 254–6, and Pausan. IX. 8. 3.

Note 16 (p. 267). ". . . a foreign-speaking foe!"

This appears strange, as both besieged and besiegers were Greeks, differing no more in dialect than the Prussians and the Austrians, or we Scotch from our English neighbours. I agree with E. P. that it is better not to be over-curious in such matters, and that Butler is right when he says that ἑτερόφωνος is only *paullo gravius dictum ad miserationem*—that is, only a little tragic exaggeration for *hostile* or *foreign*.

Note 17 (p. 268). ". . . the painted gods upon the prow."

The general practice was, that the tutelary gods were on the poop, and only the figure-head on the prow (Dict. Antiq., *Ships* and *Insigne*), but, as there was nothing to prevent the figure-head being itself a god, the case alluded to by Æschylus might often occur.—See the long note in STAN.

Note 18 (p 268). "Who knows not
That, when a city falls, they pass to the Victor"

The Roman custom of evoking the gods of a conquered city to come out of the subject shrines, and take up their dwelling with the conqueror, is well known. In LIVY, V. 21, there is a remarkable instance of this in the case of Veii—"Tuo ductu," says CAMILLUS, "Pythice Apollo, tuoque numine instinctus pergo ad delendam urbem Veios : tibique hinc decumam partem prædæ voveo. Te simul, JUNO REGINA, quæ nunc Veios colis, precor ut nos victores in nostram tuamque mox futuram urbem sequare; ubi te dignum amplitudine tua templum accipiat."

Note 19 (p. 269). "For blood of mortals is the common food."

I read φόνῳ, not φόβῳ, principally for the sake of the sentiment, as the other idea which φοβῳ gives, has been already expressed. Certainly WELL. is too positive in saying that φόβῳ is "*prorsus necessarium.*" Both readings give an equally appropriate sense : that in the text, which POT. also gives ; or this other—

"Your fear but heaps the fuel of hot war
I' the hearts o' the foe."

Note 20 (p. 270). "Dirce and Ismenus' sacred stream."

These were waters in Theban legend no less famous than INACHUS and ERASINUS in that of Argos. The waters of Dirce, in particular, were famous for their clearness and pleasantness to drink. "Dirce, flowing with a pure and sweet stream," says AELIAN, *Var. Hist.* XII. 57, quoted by UNGER. p. 187, and Æschylus in the Chorus immediately following, equals its praise to that of the Nile, sung so magnificently in the Suppliants."

Note 21 (p. 271). "From Poseidon earth-embracing,
And from Tethys' winding sons."

Γαιήοχος—the "*Earth-holder*" or "*Earth-embracer*," is a designat
of Poseidon, stamped to the Greek ear with the familiar authority
Homer. According to Hesiod, and the Greek mythology generally,
fountains were the sons of Ocean either directly or indirectly, through
rivers, who owned the same fatherhood. Tethys is the primeval Amp
trite.—See Note 13 to Prometheus, p. 390 above.

Note 22 (p. 273). ". . . at the Prœtian portal Tydeus stands.

"A gate of doubtful parentage, from which the road went out fr
Thebes direct to Chalcis in Eubœa."—UNGER. p. 297. "Here, by
wayside, was the tomb of Melanippus, the champion of this gate, who s
his adversary Tydeus."—PAUSAN. IX. 8. This Tydeus is the father
Diomedes, whose exploits against men and gods are so nobly sung
Iliad V. From the frequency of the words βοᾶν, βοὴν, βρέμειν, etc. in
fine description, one might almost think that Æschylus had wished to pa
the father after the Homeric likeness of the son, who, like Menelaus,
βοὴν ἀγαθός. In the heroic ages, a pair of brazen lungs was not
least useful accomplishment of a warrior. The great fame of the fat
of Diomedes as a warrior appears strikingly from that passage of the I
(IV. 370), where Agamemnon uses it as a strong goad to prick the valor
purpose of the son.

Note 23 (p. 273). ". . . the wise Oiclidan seer."

"Amphiaraus, the son of Oicles, being a prophet, and foreseeing t
all who should join in the expedition against Thebes would perish, refu
to go himself, and dissuaded others. Polynices, however, coming to Ip
the son of Alector, inquired how Amphiaraus might be forced to join
expedition, and was told that this would take place if his wife Eriph
should obtain the necklace of Harmonia. This, accordingly, Polyn
gave her, she receiving the gift in the face of an interdict in that matter
on her by her husband. Induced by this bribe, she persuaded her husb
to march against his will, he having beforehand promised to refer
matter in dispute between him and Adrastus to the decision of his wife
APOLLODOR. III. 6; Confr. Hor. III. 16, 11.

Note 24 (p. 273). "The brazen bells ring fear."

A Scottish knight, in an old ballad, has these warlike bells on his hor
mane—

"At ilk tail o' his horse's mane,
There hung a siller bell:
The wind was loud, the steed was proud,
And they gied a sindry knell."—YOUNG WATERS.

And one of SOUTHEY's Mexican heroes has them on his helmet—

"Bells of gold
Embossed his glittering helmet, and where'er
Their sound was heard, there lay the press of war,
And Death was busiest there."—MADOC. II. 18.

Note 25 (p. 274).

"His race from those whom Ares spared he draws."

That is to say, he belonged to one of the oldest originally The
families—was one of the children of the soil, sprung from the teeth of

old Theban dragon, which Cadmus, by the advice of Athena, sowed in the Earth; and from that act, the old race of Thebans were called σπαρτοί, or the *Sown*. See STAN.'s note.

Note 26 (p. 274). "Proud Capaneus before the Electran gate."

This gate was so called from Electra, the sister of Cadmus. *Pausan.* IX. 8-3. And was the gate which led to Platæa and Athens. *Unger.* p. 274.

Note 27 (p. 275). ". . . The third lot to Eteocles
Leapt from the upturned brazen helm."

The custom of using the helmet, for the *situla* or urn, when lots were taken in war, must have been noted by the most superficial student of Homer. STAN. has collected many instances, of which one may suffice—

"Quickly, in the brazen helm, we shake the lot; and first of all,
Of Eurylochus, mighty-hearted, leapt the lot."—ODYSSEY X. 206.

Note 28 (p. 275). "At the Netaean gate."

So called from Neis, a son of Zethus, the brother of Amphion. *Pausan.* IX. 8; *Unger.* p. 313.

Note 29 (p. 276).
"Black smoke, the volumed sister of the flame."

Just as Homer, in a familiar passage, calls "sleep the mother of death" (Il. XIV. 231), adopted by SHELLEY in the exquisite exordium of Queen Mab—

"How beautiful is Death,
Death and his brother Sleep!"

MITCHELL, in a note on the metaphors of Æschylus (Aristoph. Ran. 871), mentions this as being one of those tropes, where the high-vaulting tragedian has jerked himself over from the sublime into the closely-bordering territory of the ridiculous; but neither here nor in διαδρομᾶν δμαίμονες, which he quarrels with, is there anything offensive to the laws of good taste. It sounds, indeed, a little queer to translate literally, *Rapine near akin to running hither and thither;* but, as a matter of plain fact, it is true that, when in the confusion of the taking of a city, men run hither and thither, rapine is the result. In my version, *Plunder, daughter of Confusion* (p. 272 above), expresses the idea intelligibly enough, I hope, to an English ear.

Note 30 (p. 276). "Round its hollow belly was embossed
A ring of knotted snakes."

The old Argolic shield, round as the sun—

"Argolici clypei aut Phœbææ lampadis instar."

See Dict. Antiq. *Clypeus.* The kind described in the text finds its modern counterpart in those hollow Burmese shields often found in our museums, only larger.

Note 31 (p. 276). ". . . by the god of war
Indwelt."

ἔνθεος δ' Ἄρει, literally, "ingodded by Mars," or having the god of war dwelling in him. This phrase shows the meaning of that reproach cast by the Pharisees in the teeth of Christ—ἔχει δαιμόνιον—*he hath a devil*, or, as the Greeks would have said, *a god—i.e.* he is possessed by a moral power

so far removed from the common, that we must attribute it to the indwel
might of a god or devil.

Note 32 (p. 276). ". . . a hostile pair
Well matched by Hermes."

The Greeks ascribed to Hermes every thing that they met with on
road, and every thing accidentally found, and whatever happens by chanc
and so two adversaries well matched in battle were said to have b
brought together by the happy contrivance of that god."—SCHOL. ; and
Note 59 to the Eumenides, p. 386.

Note 33 (p. 278). "The sixth a sober man, a seer of might,
Before the Homoloidian gate stands forth."

i.e. AMPHIARAUS—see above, Note 23, p. 420. Homer (Odys. X
244) speaks of him as beloved by Jove and Apollo. The Homoloid
gates were so called either from mount Homole in Thessaly (Pausan. IX.
or from Homolois, a daughter of Niobe and Amphion.—UNGER. p. 324.

Note 34 (p. 278). "With bitter taunts his evil-omened name,
Making it spell his ugly sin that owns it."

The name *Polynices* means literally *much strife;* and there can be
question that the prophet in this place is described as taunting the S
of Oedipus with the evil omen of his name after the fashion so familiar w
the Greek writers. See *Prometheus*, Note 8, p. 388. The text, howev
is in more places than one extremely corrupt ; and, in present circumstanc
I quite agree with WELL. and LIN. that we are not warranted in introduc
the conjectural reading of *δμμα* for *δνομα*, though there can be no quest
that the reading *δμμα* admits of a sufficiently appropriate sense.—
DUNBAR, *Class. Museum*, No. XII. p. 206.

Note 35 (p. 278).
"The wise man is what fools but seem to be."

"When this tragedy was first acted, ARISTIDES, surnamed the JUST,
present. At the declamation of these words—

οὐ γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος ἀλλ' εἶναι θέλει,

the whole audience, by an instantaneous instinct, directed their eyes to hi
—PLUTARCH, *Apoth. Reg. et duc.* SALLUST describes Cato in the sa
language—"*Esse quam videri bonus malebat.*"—STAN.

Note 36 (p. 280). "O god-detested! god-bemadded race!"

In modern theological language we are not accustomed to impute me
infatuation, insanity, or desperate impulses of any kind to the Supre
Being ; but in the olden time such language as that of the text was familia
in the mouth of Jew and Gentile. "*The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart,*
a sentence which we all remember, perhaps with a strange sensation of m
terious terror, from our juvenile lessons ; and "*quos Deus vult perdere pr
dementat,*" is a common maxim in our mouths, though we scarcely half beli
it. In Homer and the tragedians instances of this kind occur everywhe
and in the Persians of our author the gods are addressed in a style of the m
unmitigated accusation. In such cases, modern translators are often incli

to soften down the apparent impiety of the expression into some polite modern generality; but I have scrupulously retained the original phraseology. I leave it to the intelligent reader to work out the philosophy of this matter for himself.

Note 37 (p. 281). ". . . the god will have it so."

This is one of the cases so frequent in the ancient poets (Note 76 to Choephoræ, p. 372) where *θεός* is used in the singular without the article. In the present case the translators seem agreed in supplying the definite particle, as Phœbus, mentioned in the next line, may naturally be understood. In modern language, where a man is urged on to his destruction by a violent unreasoning passion, reference is generally made to an overruling decree or destiny, rather than directly to the author of all destiny. "But my ill-fate pushed me on with an obstinacy that nothing could resist; and, though I had several times loud calls from my reason and my more composed judgment to go home, yet I had no power to do it. *I know not what to call this, nor will I urge that it is a secret overruling decree that hurries us on to be the instruments of our own destruction, even though it be before us, and that we rush upon as with our eyes open.* Certainly nothing but some such decreed unavoidable misery attending, and which it was impossible for me to escape, could have pushed me forward against the calm reasonings and persuasions of my most retired thoughts."—*Robinson Crusoe.* On this subject see my *Homeric Theology. Class. Mus.* No. XXVI. Propositions 5, 12, and 18 compared.

Note 38 (p. 281). "Death is thy only gain, and death to-day
Is better than to-morrow!"

Λέγουσα κέρδος πρότερον ὑστέρου μόρου—mentioning to me an advantage (viz., in my dying now) *preferable to a death at a later period;* as his good genius might have whispered to Napoleon Bonaparte at Waterloo. In translating thus a confessedly difficult passage I have WELCKER (Trilog. 363), BUTLER, BLOM., and SCHÜTZ., and E. P. Oxon., on my side, also the simple comment of Scholiast II.—*κερδῶς, i.e. τὸ νῦν τεθνᾶναι πρότερον, i. e. τιμιώτερον.* LIN. agreeing with WELL. translates "urging the glory of the victory which precedes the death which follows after it." CONZ. is singular, and certainly not to be imitated in translating with Schol. I.—

"*Wer der erste tödtet gewinnt den Sieg.*"
"He who inflicts the first lethal blow gains the victory."

POT. has not grappled with the passage. If LIN.'s interpretation be preferred, I should render—

"Beside me sits
The Fury with dry tearless eye, and points to
One glimpse of glory heralding black death."

or— "The glorious gain that shall precede the death."

It will be observed that if *πρότερον* be taken in the sense of *τιμιώτερον*, with the Scholiast, and *το νῦν τεθναναι* understood to *κέρδος*, Wellauer's objection falls that *μαλλον* or *μειζον* must be understood to render the rendering in my text admissible.

Note 39 (p. 282). ". . . goddess most ungodlike."

I have remarked, in a Note above, that the Greeks, so far from having any objection to the idea that the gods were the authors of evil, rather

encouraged it; and accordingly, in their theology, they had no need fo devil or devils in any shape. This truth, however, must be received with qualification, arising from the general preponderating character of the Gr deities, which was unquestionably benign, and coloured more from the s shine than the cloud; in reference to which general character, it might v be said that certain deities, whose function was purely to induce misery, w *οὐ θεοῖς ὅμοιοι—nothing like the gods.*

Note 40 (p. 282). "O son of Scythia, must we ask thine aid?
Chalybian stranger thine."

We see here how loosely the ancients used certain geographical terms, a especially this word SCYTHIA; for the CHALYBES or CHALDAEI, as they w afterwards called, were a people of PONTUS. Their country produced, the most ancient times, silver also; but, in the days of Strabo, iron only STRABO, Lib. XII. p. 549.

Note. 41 (p. 284). ". . . for sorry tendance wrathful."

I read *ἐπίκοτος τροφᾶς* with HEATH., BLOM., and PAL. For the comm reading, *ἐπικότους τροφάς*, WELL., with his usual conservative ingenuity, fi a sort of meaning; but the change which the new reading requires is v slight, and gives a much more obvious sense; besides that it enables us understand the allusion to Æschylus in Schol. Oedip. Col. 1375.—S Introductory Remarks, WELCKER's *Trilogie*, p. 358, and PAL.'s Note.

Note 42 (p. 284). ". . . (for still in four and three
The god delights)."

These words are a sort of comment on the epithet *ἑβδομαγέτας* given Apollo in the text, of which PAPE, in his Dictionary, gives the follow account: "Surname of Apollo, because sacrifice was offered to him on seventh day of every month, or as LOBECK says (Aglaoph. p. 434), beca seven boys and seven girls led the procession at his feasts.—Herod. VI. The ancients were not agreed in the interpretation of this epithet." I not *necessary*, however, I must admit with SCHNEIDER, to suppose a reference to this religious arithmetic here. Phœbus receives the seve gate, because, as the prophet of the doom, it was his special business to it fulfilled; and this he could do only there, where the devoted heads Eteocles and Polynices stood.

Note 43 (p. 285).

"And I for plaints no less than pæans bring thee."

I see no sufficient case made out for giving these words from *τοιᾶνα* do to *φορουμενοι* to the Chorus. The Messenger, surely, may be allowed moral reflections without stint in the first place, as the Chorus is to enla on the same theme in the chaunt which immediately follows. It strikes also, that the tone of the passage is not sufficiently passionate for the Cho

Note 44 (p. 289). "Ay, drenched in gore, in brothered gore."

In the old editions, and in POT. and GLASG. these words are given Ismene; but never was a scenic change made with greater propriety t that of BRUNCK, when he continued these speeches down to the end of A strophe IV. to the Chorus. Nothing could be more unnatural than that

afflicted sisters, under such a load of woe, should open their mouths with long speeches—long, assuredly, in comparison of what they afterwards say. They are properly silent, till the Chorus has finished the wail; and then they speak only in short exclamations—articulated sobs—nothing more. For the same reason, deserting WELL., I have given the repeated burden Ἰὼ Μοῖρα, etc. to the Chorus. The principal mourners in this dirge should sing only in short and broken cries.

Note 45 (p. 290). "Moera, baneful gifts dispensing."

The word μοῖρα originally means *lot, portion, part, that which is dealt* or *divided out to one.* In this sense it occurs frequently in Homer, and is there regarded as proceeding from the gods, and specially from Jove. But with an inconsistency natural enough in popular poetry, we sometimes find μοῖρα in Homer, like ἄτη, elevated to the rank of a separate divine personage. "Not I," says Agamemnon, in the Iliad (XIX. 86), "was to blame for the quarrel with Achilles,

But JOVE *and* MOERA *and the* FURY, *walking through the darkness dread.*'

The three Fates, CLOTHO, LACHESIS, and ATROPOS, like the three FURIES, were a post-Homeric birth. We thus see how, under the influence of the Polytheistic system, new gods were continually created from what were originally mere functions of the divine mind, or results of the divine activity.

Note 46 (p. 292). "Due burial in its friendly bosom."

θάπτειν ἔδοξε γῆς φίλαις κατασκαφαῖς. The words here used seem to imply interment in the modern fashion, without burning, but they may also refer to the depositing of the urns in subterranean chambers. Ancient remains, as well as the testimony of classical authors, prove that both practices existed among the ancients, though cremation was latterly the more common. The reader will be instructed by the following extract on this subject from Dr. Smith's admirable Dictionary of Antiquities, article *Funus:* "The body was either buried or burnt. Lucian, *de luctu*, says that the Greeks burn, and the Persians bury, their dead; but modern writers are greatly divided in opinion as to which was the usual practice. Wachsmuth (*Hell. Alt.* II. 2, p. 79) says that, in historical times, the dead were always buried; but this statement is not strictly correct. Thus we find that Socrates (Plut. Phædon) speaks of his body being either burnt or buried; the body of Timoleon was burnt; and so was that of Philopœmon (Plutarch). The word θάπτειν is used in connection with either mode; it is applied to the collection of the ashes after burning; and accordingly we find the words κάιειν and θάπτειν used together (Dionys. Archæolog. Rom. V. 48). The proper expression for interment in the earth is κατορύττειν; whereas we find Socrates speaking of το σῶμα η καόμενον, ἢ κατοριττόμενον. In Homer, the bodies of the dead are burnt; but interment was also used in very ancient times. Cicero (*de leg.* II. 25) says that the dead were buried at Athens in the time of Cecrops; and we also read of the bones of Orestes being found in a coffin at Tegea (Herod. I. 68). The dead were commonly buried among the Spartans (Plut. Lycurg. 27) and the Sicyonians (Paus. II. 7); and the prevalence of this practice is proved by the great number of skeletons found in coffins in modern times, which have evidently not been exposed to the action of fire. Both burning and burying appear to have been always used, to a greater or less extent, at different periods; till the spread of Christianity at length put an end to the former practice."

Note 47 (p. 293). "Mighty Furies that triumphant
Ride on ruin's baleful wings."

I have here, by a paraphrase, endeavoured to express the remarka
pregnant expression of the original κῆρες Ερινύες—combining, as it does
grammatical apposition, two terrible divine powers, that the ancient p
generally keep separate. The κῆρες, or goddesses of destruction and vio
death, occur frequently in Homer. Strictly speaking, they represent
one of the methods by which the retributive Furies may operate; but, i
loose way of talking, they are sometimes identified with them. Schoema
in a note to the Eumenides, p. 62, has quoted to this effect, Hesiod v. 2
and Eurip. Elect. v. 1252:—

"The terrible Kerés, blushless persecutors,
Will chase thee wandering frenzied o'er the earth."

NOTES TO THE PERSIANS

Note 1 (p. 301). "Forth they went with arrow and bow."

The bow was as characteristic of Persian as the spear of Hellenic warfare; and, accordingly, they are contrasted below, p. 305. The Persian Darics bore the figure of an archer. DICT. ANTIQ. *voci* DARIC. "The army of Xerxes, generally," says GROTE, "was armed with missile weapons, and light shields, or no shield at all; not properly equipped either for fighting in regular order, or for resisting the line of spears and shields which the Grecian heavy-armed infantry brought to bear upon them." —Vol. V. p. 43. This was seen with striking evidence when an engagement took place on confined ground as at Thermopylæ, Do. p. 117.

Note 2 (p. 302). ". . . golden Sardes."

So Creon, in the Antigone of Sophocles, in wrathful suspicion that Tiresias is in conspiracy to prophesy against him for filthy lucre, is made to exclaim (v. 1037)—

> "Traffic as ye will
> In the amber-ore that opulent Sardes sends,
> And Indian gold."

So also, "golden Babylon," below; which will recall to the Christian reader the famous words, "Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say How hath the oppressor ceased, the golden city ceased!"—Isaiah xiv. 4. In the same way XERXES is called "the god-like son of a golden race," in the choral hymn which immediately follows the present introductory chaunt. SOUTHEY, the most learned of our poets, has not forgotten this orientalism when he says—

> "Hark! at the golden palaces
> The Brahmin strikes the hour."—CURSE OF KEHAMA V.

where see the note.

Note 3 (p. 302). "The well-poised dart."

The Mysians had on their heads a peculiar sort of helmet belonging to the country, small shields, and javelins burnt at the point.—HERODOT. VII. 74.—STAN.

Note 4 (p. 302). "The Asian tribes that wear the sword."

The μάχαιρα here is the *acinaces*, or short scimitar, of which the fashion may be seen in the *Dict. Antiq.* under that word.

Note 5 (p. 303). "Shepherd of many sheep."

A phraseology inherited from the times when "Mesha, king of Moab, was a *sheepmaster*, and rendered unto the king of Israel 100,000 lambs, and 100,000 rams, with the wool."—2 Kings iii. 4. So Agamemnon, in Homer (Od. III. 156), is called ποιμήν λάων—the shepherd of the people. See above, p. 413, Note 48.

Note 6 (p. 304). "But, when the gods deceive."

The sudden change of tone here from unlimited confidence in the stre of their own armament, to a pious doubt arising from the consideration the gods often disappoint "the best laid schemes of men and mice," that "the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong"; is at once extremely characteristic of ancient Hellenic piety (see the N on ὕβρις, p. 348), and serves here the dramatic purpose of making over-weening pride of Xerxes, by contrast, appear more sinful. V regard to the style of religious conception here, and the general doct that the gods deceive mortal men, especially at moments of extraordi prosperity and on the point of some sudden reversal, the student will *Grote's* Greece, Vol. V. p. 13.

Note 7 (p. 306).

"Let us fall down before her with humble prostration."

This very humble way of expressing respect was quite oriental, altogether abhorrent to the feelings of the erect Greek, boasting of liberty. The reader of history may call to mind how this was one of points of oriental court state, the mooting of which in his later years cau a breach between Alexander the Great and his captains. For referen see STAN.

Note 8 (p. 307).

"And dipped my hands in the fair-flowing fount."

This purification, as STAN. has noted, was customary among the ancie after an ill-omened dream. He quotes ARISTOPHANES, Ran. 1338.

> "But come, attendants, light a lamp
> And take a pail, and from the stream
> Water bring, and warm it well,
> To wash away the god-sent dream"—

and other passages.

Note 9 (p. 307). "I saw an eagle flying to the altar."

The sight in reality, or in vision, of one bird plucking another un various modifications, was familiar to the ancient divination, as the natu expression of conquest and subjugation. So in the Odyssey shortly bef the opening of the catastrophe—

> "Thus as he spake, on his right hand a bird of omen flew,
> A hawk, Apollo's messenger swift, and held within its claws
> A pigeon, which it rudely plucked, and scattered on the ground
> Its feathery plumes, between the skies and where Telemachus stood."—XV. 52

In such matters, the ancients did not strain after originality, as a mod would do, but held closely by the most natural, obvious, and most signific types.

Note 10 (p. 308).

"Where, O friends, is famous Athens on the broad face of the earth?"

Here commences a series of questions with regard to Attic geograph topography, and statistics, which to the most inexperienced reader w appear to come in here not in the most natural way. That the mother Xerxes should have actually been so ignorant of the state of Athens, as s is here dramatically represented, seems scarcely supposable. But that s

nd the mighty persons of the East generally were grossly ignorant of, and greatly underrated the resources of the small state that was rising in the West, is plain, both from the general habit of the oriental mind, and from what Herodotus (V. 105, quoted by PAL.) narrates of Darius, that, when he heard of the burning of Sardes by the Athenians and the Ionians, he asked '*who the Athenians were.*" On this foundation, a dramatic poet, willing 'to pay a pleasant compliment to Athenian vanity" (BUCK.), might well erect such a series of interrogatories as we have in the text, though it may be doubted whether he has done it with that tact which a more perfect master of the dramatic art—Shakespere, for instance—would have displayed. There are not a few other passages in the Greek drama where this formal style of questioning *ab ovo* assumes somewhat of a ludicrous aspect.

Note 11 (p. 309).

"Slaves are they to no man living, subject to no earthly name."

As in the quickness of their spirits, the sharpness of their wits, and their love of glory, so particularly in the forward boast of freedom, the ancient Hellenes were very like the modern French. 'Twere a curious parallel to carry out; and that other one also, which would prove even more fertile in curious results, between the ancient Romans and the modern English.

Note 12 (p. 310).

"The sundered planks, and the drifted dead."

I do not think there can be any doubt as to the meaning of the original here, πλαγκτοῖς ἐν διπλάκεσσιν—*among the wandering planks*—δίπλαξ can mean nothing but a double or very strong *plank*, *plate*, or (if applied to a dress, as in HOMER) *fold*. There is no need of supposing any "clinging to the planks," as LIN., following BUTLER, does. Nevertheless, I have given, likewise, in my translation, the full force of BLOM.'s idea that δίπλαξ means the *ebb and flow of the sea*. This, indeed, lies already in φέρεσθαι. CONZ. agrees with my version. "*Wie treiben stürmend umher sie die Planken!*"

Note 13 (p. 311). ". . . There Amestris."

PAL. asserts confidently that the three following verses are corrupt. One of them sins against Porson's canon of the Cretic ending, and (what is of much more consequence) connects the name of Ariomardus with Sardes, which we found above (p. 302), connected with Thebes. For the sake of consistency, I have taken PORSON'S hint, and introduced Metragathus here, from v. 43.

Note 14 (p. 312). ". . . Pallas saves her city."

The apportionment of the last clause of this, and the whole of the following lines, I give according to WELL. and PAL., which BUCK. also approves in his note. The translation, in such a case, is its own best vindication.

Note 15 (p. 312). "There came a Greek."

The sending of this person was a device of Themistocles, to hasten on a battle, and keep the Greeks from quarrelling amongst themselves. The person sent was Sicinnus his slave, "seemingly an Asiatic Greek, who understood Persian, and had perhaps been sold during the late Ionic revolt,

but whose superior qualities are marked by the fact, that he had the and teaching of the children of his master."—GROTE.

Note 16 (p. 312). "And darkness filled the temple of the sky

The word *τέμενος*, says Passow, in the post-Homeric writers of classical age was used almost exclusively in reference to sacred, or, a should say, consecrated property. I do not think, therefore, that LIN. full justice to this word when he translates it merely "the *region o air*"; as little can I be content with CONZ.'s "*Hallen.*" DRO preserves the religious association to well-instructed readers, by using word *Hain*; but surely *temple* is better in the present connection an a modern ear. Lucretius (Lib. I. near the end) has "*Coeli tonit templa.*"

Note 17 (p. 314). ". . . dance-loving Pan."

PAN, "the simple shepherd's awe-inspiring god" (Wordsworth, Exc. was in the mind of the Athenians intimately associated with the glo the Persian wars, and regarded as one of their chief patrons at Mara (Herod. VI. 105). This god was the natural patron of all wild and sol places, such as are seldom disturbed by any human foot save that o Arcadian shepherds, whose imagination first produced this half-solemn freakish creation; and in this view no place could be more appropr to him than "the barren and rocky Psyttaleia" (STRABO, 395). Tha was actually worshipped there, we have, besides the present passage of poet, the express testimony of Pausanias (I. 36)—"What are called P terrors were ascribed to Pan; for loud noises whose cause could no easily traced were not unfrequently heard in mountainous regions; and gloom and loneliness of forests and mountains fill the mind with a s horror, and dispose it to superstitious apprehensions."—KEIGHTLEY.

Note 18 (p. 315). ". . slowly with much hard toil."

The verse in the original—

Θρήκην περάσαντες μόγις πολλῷ πονῳ

—is remarkable for being divided into two equal halves, in violation of common cæsuras, the laws of which Porson has pointed out so curiou Whether there was a special cause for this in the present case—the w namely, on the part of the poet to make a harsh line suit a harsh sub I shall not assert, as the line does not fall particularly harsh on my ea have at least done something, by the help of rough consonants and m syllables, to make my English line come up to the great metrician's ide the Greek.

Note 19 (p. 317). "By the mute sea-monsters riven."

It needs hardly be mentioned here that the restless state of the dead b in death by drowning, implied, according to the sensuous metaphysics of vulgar Greeks, an equally restless condition of the soul in Hades. He the point of Achilles' wrath against Lycaon, in Iliad XXI. 122—

> "Go, and with the fishes lay thee; they shall lick thy bloody wound
> With a greedy unconcern; thy mother shall not weep for thee
> There, nor dew thy bier with sorrow; but Scamander's whirling flood
> To the bosom deep shall bear thee of the broad and briny sea."

And, in the same book, of another victim of the same inexorable wrath it is said—

"To the eels and to the fishes, occupation meet he gave,
As they gnawed his flesh, and nicely picked the fat from off his bones."—v. 203.

Note 20 (p. 318). "Of the pale green olive, ever leafy-fair."

I think it right so to translate, because such is actually the colour of the olive; but I must state, at the same time, that the word in the original is ξανθῆς, which has been imitated by Virgil, Æn. V. 309. How the same word should mean both *yellow* and *green*, I cannot understand. No doubt the light green of many trees, when the leafage first comes out in spring, has a yellowish appearance; but the ever-green olive is always γλαυκός, as Sophocles has it (O. C. 701). What we call *olive-coloured* is a mixture of green and yellow; does this come from the colour of the fruit or the oil?

Note 21 (p. 318). "The god Darius."

The word δαίμονα here used is that by which both Homer and Æschylus designate the highest celestial beings, from which practice we see what an easy transition there was in the minds of the early Christians to the deification of the martyrs, and the canonization of the saints. Compare Æn. V. v. 47. There is nothing in Popery which is not seated in the deepest roots of human nature.

Note 22 (p. 319). "O Aïdóneus, thy charge release."

i.e. Pluto. The reader must not be surprised to see Æschylus putting the names of Greek gods and Greek feelings and ideas generally into the mouths of Persian characters. His excuse lies partly in the fact, that these divine powers and human feelings, though in a Greek form, belonged to the universal heart of man, and partly in the extreme nationality of the old Hellenic culture, which was not apt to go abroad with curiously inquiring eyes into the regions of the barbarian. A national poet, moreover, addressing the masses, must beware of being too learned. Shakespere, in his foreign dramas, though less erudite, is much more effective than Southey in his Epics.

Note 23 (p. 319). "Come, dread lord!"

The word in the original here is βαλὴν, a Phœnician word, the same as *Baal* and *Belus*, meaning *lord*.—See Gesenius, *voce Baal*. This root appears significantly in some Carthaginian names, as HANNIBAL, HASDRUBAL, etc.

Note 24 (p. 319). "The disc of thy regal tiara showing."

This word belongs as characteristically to the ancient kings of the East, in respect of their head-gear, as the *triregno* or triple crown, in modern language, belongs to the Pope, and the iron crown to the sovereigns of Lombardy. Accordingly we find Virgil giving it to Priam—

"Sceptrumque sacerque tiaras."—ÆNEID VII. 247.

See further, Dr. Smith's Dict. Antiq. *in voce tiara*, and also φάλαρον, which I translate *disc*. As for the *sandals*, the reader will observe that *saffron* is a colour, like *purple*, peculiarly regal and luxurious—στολίδα κροκόεσσαν ἀνείσα τρυφᾶς.—Eurip. Phœniss. 1491.—*Matth.*

Note 25 (p. 320). "Why should'st thou die, and leave the land,
Thou master of the mighty hand?
Why should thy son with foolish venture
Shake thy sure Empire to its centre?"

Here I may say with BUCK., "I have given the best sense I ca
the text, but nothing is here certain but the uncertainty of the read
For a translator, *δι ἄνοιαν*, proposed by BLOM., is convenient enough.

Note 26 (p. 320). "Triremes no more?"

ναες ἄναες ἀναες—A phraseology of which we have found many insta
and of which the Greeks are very fond. So in Homer, before the
between Ulysses and Irus, one of the spectators foreseeing the discom
of the latter, says—

Ἦ τάχα Ἶρος ἄΙρος ἐπίσπαστον κακον ἕξει
ὁιην ἐκ ρακέων ὁ γέρων ἐπιγουνίδα φαινει.

"Irus soon shall be no Irus, crushed by such dire weight of woes,
Self-incurred; beneath his tatters what a thigh the old man shows!'

Note 27 (p. 322).

"But when man to run is eager, swift is the god to add a spur

This is sound morality and orthodox theology, even at the present h
Quos Deus vult perdere prius dementat. Observe here how high Æsch
rises in moral tone above Herodotus, who, in the style that offend
so much in Homer, represents Xerxes, after yielding to the sensible ad
of his father's counsellor Artabanus, as urged on to his ruin by a god-
vision thrice repeated (VII. 12–18). The whole expedition, accordin
the historian, is as much a matter of divine planning as the death of He
by Athena's cruel deceit in Iliad XXII. 299. Even Artabanus is car
along by the stream of evil counsel, confessing that *δαιμονίη τις γίν
ὁρμὴ, there is an impulse from the gods* in the matter which a man may
resist.—See GROTE.

Note 28 (p. 323).

"Converse with the sons of folly taught thy eager son to err."

The original word for *eager* here is the same as that translated ab
impetuous—*θούριος*, and had a peculiar significancy to a Greek ear, as b
that epithet by which Mars is constantly designated in the Iliad; and
god, as the readers of that poem well know, signifies only the wild,
reasoning hurricane power of battle, as distinguished from the calmly-ca
lated, surely-guided hostility of the wise Athena. With regard to
matter of fact asserted in this line, it is literally true that the son of Da
was not of himself originally much inclined to the Greek expedition (*ἐπὶ
τὴν Ἑλλάδα ὀυδαμῶς πρόθυμος ἦν κατ ἀρχὰς στρατέυεσθαι.*—Herod. VII.
but, like all weaklings in high places, was wrought upon by others; in
case, specially, by his cousin Mardonius, according to the account
Herodotus.—See GROTE, Vol. V. p. 4.

Note 29 (p. 323). "... First the Mede was king
Of the vast host of people."

Two peculiarities in this enumeration of the early Persian kings will strike the reader. *First*, Two of the Median kings—ASTYAGES and CYAXARES, according to the common account, are named before CYRUS the Great, who, as being the first native Persian sovereign, is commonly regarded as the founder of the later Persian empire. *Second*, Between MARDUS (commonly called SMERDIS), and Darius, the father of Xerxes, two intermediate names—contrary to common account—are introduced. I do not believe our historical materials are such as entitle us curiously to scrutinize these matters.

Note 30 (p. 328). "A Maryandine wailer."

The *Maryandini* were a Bithynian people, near the Greek city of Heraclea, Xenoph. Anab. VI. 2; Strabo XII. p. 542. The peasants in that quarter were famous for singing a rustic wail, which is alluded to in the text. See POLLUX, Lib. IV. περὶ ἀσμάτων ἐθνικῶν. The *Mysians* mentioned, p. 331, below, were their next door neighbours; and the Phrygians generally, who in a large sense include the Mysians and Bithynians, were famous for their violent and passionate music, displayed principally in the worship of Cybele. So the Phrygian in Euripides (Orest. 1384) is introduced wailing ἀρμάτειον μέλος βαρβαρῳ βοᾳ. The critics who have considered this last scene of the cantata ridiculous, have not attended either to human nature or to the customs of the Persians, as STAN. quotes them from HEROD. IX. 24, and CURTIUS III. 12.

Note 31 (p. 328).

Leader of the Chorus. I have here adopted LIN.'s view, that the Leader of the Chorus here addresses the whole body; and, for the sake of symmetry, have repeated the couplet in the Antistrophe. No violence is thus done to the meaning of ἐκπεύθου. Another way is, with PAL., to put the line into the mouth of Xerxes—"*Cry out and ask me!*"

Note 32 (p. 331). "Oaring with the oars of woe!"

I have carefully retained the original phraseology here, as being characteristic of the Greek tragedians, perhaps of the maritime propensities of the Athenians. See in SEVEN AGAINST THEBES, p. 286 above, and CHŒPHORÆ, p. 112, Strophe VII. Euripides, in Iphig. Aul. 131, applies the same verb to the lower extremities, making Agamemnon say to his old servant ερέσσον σὸν πόδα—as if one of our jolly tars should say in his pleasant slang, "*Come along, my boy, put the oars to your old hull, and move off!*"

Note 33 (p. 332). "Sons of Susa, with delicate feet."

I should be most happy for the sake of Æschylus, and my translation, to think there was nothing in the ἁβροβάται of this passage but the natural expression of grief so simply given in the scriptural narrative, 1 Kings xxi. 27; and in that stanza of one of Mr. Tennyson's most beautiful poems—

"Full knee-deep lies the wintry snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing;

Toll ye the church bell sad and slow,
And *tread softly*, and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying."

But there is more in ἁβρός than mere *gentleness*, and to the Greek would no doubt speak of the general luxuriance and effeminacy o Persian manners. To put such an allusion into the mouth of Xerxes o present occasion is no doubt in the worst possible taste; but the G were too intensely national in their feelings to take a curious accou such matters.

LIST OF EDITIONS COMMENTARIES AND TRANSLATIONS

USED BY THE TRANSLATOR

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VICTORIUS: ex officina Stephani; 1557.

FOULIS: Glasguæ; 1746.

SCHÜTZ: 2 vols. Oxon.; 1810.

BUTLER: Cantab.; 1809–16, ex editione Stanleii; 4 vols. 4to.

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